

RIVERWATCH NEWSLETTER

Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association (CRCA)

CRCA Info-line 433-4636 (x2722)

February, 1997

Editors: John Capece & Susan Beckman

The C&SF Project Restudy An Introduction

By Jim Haggart

Congress has directed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to take another look at the Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Project, the vast water management system which was built about 50 years ago. The Project involved building and operating a network of levees, canals, pump stations and water control structures. The system was originally designed to alleviate flooding in south Florida. In addition, the C&SF project was designed to provide municipal water supplies for the cities and irrigation for agricultural lands south of Lake Okeechobee. Later the project was modified to help prevent salt water intrusion into groundwater aquifers. With environmental protection now a state and national priority, the C&SF project is being modified to accommodate ecosystem priorities, while still maintaining much of its original mandate.

The Caloosahatchee River is an indispensable part of the system. When water stored in Lake Okeechobee is not needed for Project purposes, much of it is poured into the River. Historically, these discharges were made with little regard to their impact on marine habitat or water quality in the River and its estuary.

Part of the C&SF Project was to dig the channel in the River deeper and wider. As one of the principal drainage ways for the system, the River is known to the Corps as "C-43", i.e., Canal No. 43. C&SF and previous projects have created unnatural discharges from Lake Okeechobee, and radically changed the character of the River.

Congress has ordered the Corps to re-evaluate the C&SF Project, for purposes of improving the environment and providing future urban and agricultural

water needs. The scope, complexity and difficulty of this task (called "Restudy"), and the effect it could have on the River, boggle the mind.

The Corps is now in the "feasibility" phase of the Restudy, which will culminate in the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan for submission to Congress by July, 1999. One of the functions of the feasibility study, which is being done on a 50-50 cost share basis with the South Florida Water Management District (District), is to gather input from special interest groups on the problems and issues which the Restudy should consider.

Riverwatch is participating in this process. Recently five Riverwatch representatives met for several hours with key members for the Corps/District Restudy team. Some of the concerns we discussed were the need to regulate both the volume and timing of water releases from Lake Okeechobee, so that they will be less destructive of marine habitat in the River and its estuary; the necessity of establishing minimum streamflows and water levels for the Caloosahatchee and its watershed; the status of previously authorized research projects to obtain essential baseline data about the River and the watershed; and the effect of the Lower East Coast water supply study on the River.

The Restudy and its implementations will have a profound effect on the River and its watershed, and Riverwatch intends to follow them closely. Future articles in this newsletter will discuss specific issues which must be addressed for the protection of the River.

INSIDE

*Annual Meeting Announcement & Map
SUNDAY, MARCH 2*

*Exclusive Caloosahatchee
CARTOON*

Annual Meeting: Introduction & Nomination of 1997 Officers and Directors

by Rae Ann Scholle

A tremendous new slate of Officers and Directors has been recommended by the Nominating Committee to serve Riverwatch for the 1997 term. Introduction of the new officers and voting for the new Board of Directors will be Sunday March 2, 1997 from 12:30 to 2:30 at the Annual Meeting picnic at the W.P. Franklin Lock Park off State Road 80 in Olga, east Lee County.

Nominations for Officers include:

President: Rae Ann Scholle
Vice President: Steve Boutelle
Secretary: Jim Haggart
Treasurer: Bill McGrath

Nominations for the Board of Directors include returning and new members: Rob Andrys, Susan Beckman, Pam Bowman, John Cassani, Peggy

Hellenbach, Butch Jones, Keith Kibby, Erick Lindblad, Mike McCartney, Laura O'Brien, T.C. Porter, Walt Stephen and Laura Wewerka.

All members in good standing are invited to cast their vote and interested parties who are not yet members are invited to come and share in a pot-luck lunch and hear about our accomplishments and future plans for the River. There will be organized games for children, a guided Lock and Dam Tour, displays and more.

W.P. Franklin Lock & Dam Tours

Riverwatch members Rae Ann Scholle and Charles Foster presented a program for the staff and volunteers of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, W.P. Franklin Lock & Dam Park on the history and folklore of the Caloosahatchee.

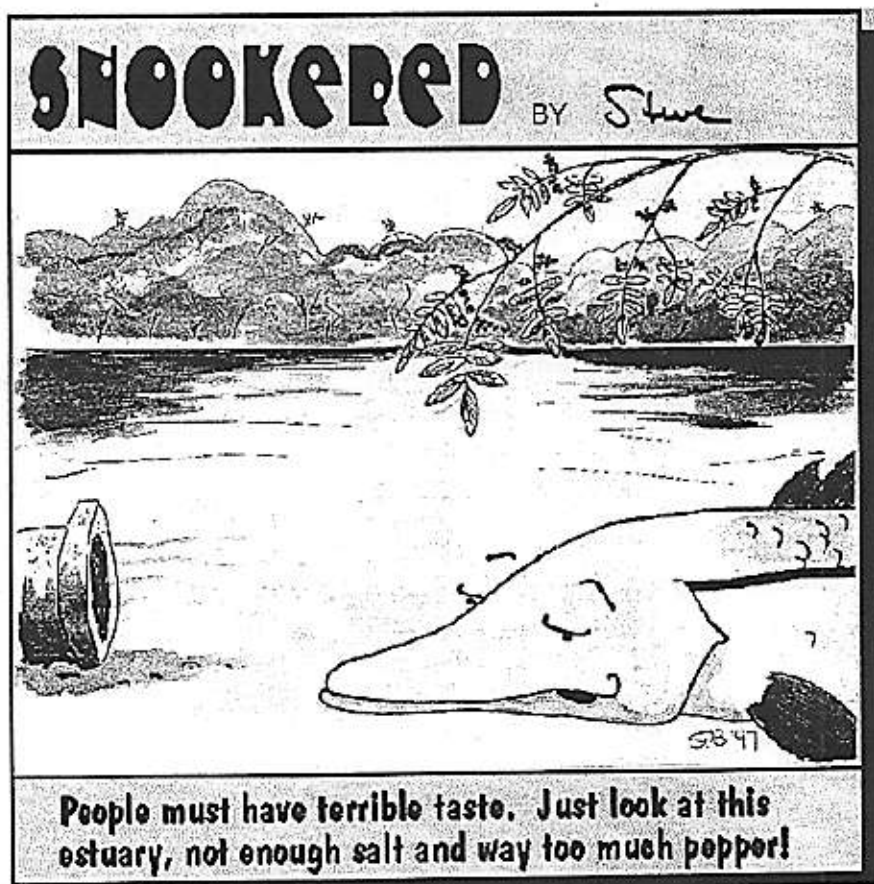
Beginning on Saturday February 1st the Corps volunteers will be guiding tours of the Lock & Dam in the Caloosahatchee River. Tours will be given at noon and at 2:00 on weekends through the season.

During the winter season, manatees can be seen along the shorelines bordering the locks. For more information about the tours, call the park at 694-2582.

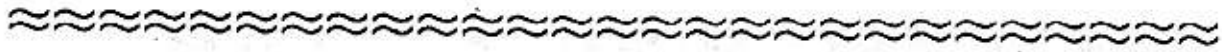
*You Can Help to
Make Your
Riverwatch
Newsletter More
Interesting!*

If you have any novel ideas of how to improve the Newsletter, or interesting information or materials that you think may be included in the next issue, please share it with us by sending it to:

PO Box 08004, Ft.
Myers, FL 33908, or
call our hot line at
433-4636 (x2722)



Riverwatch



1997 Annual Meeting
of the Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association

Sunday March 2, 1997

W.P. Franklin Lock & Dam Park
Map on Reverse

Program

- | | |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12:30 | Registration & Pot Luck Lunch
Games for children |
| 1:30 | Convene Annual Meeting
Welcome, Past Accomplishments - Jim Haggart |
| 1:40 | A Look Ahead, Future Plans - Rae Ann Scholle |
| 1:50 | Introduce Board of Director Candidates
Additional nominations
Elect Board of Directors |
| 2:00 | Adjourn Membership Meeting |
| 2:00 | Convene Board of Directors Meeting
Elect Officers
Adjourn |
| 2:15 | Guided Lock & Dam Tour
Project Presentations/Boat Tours |

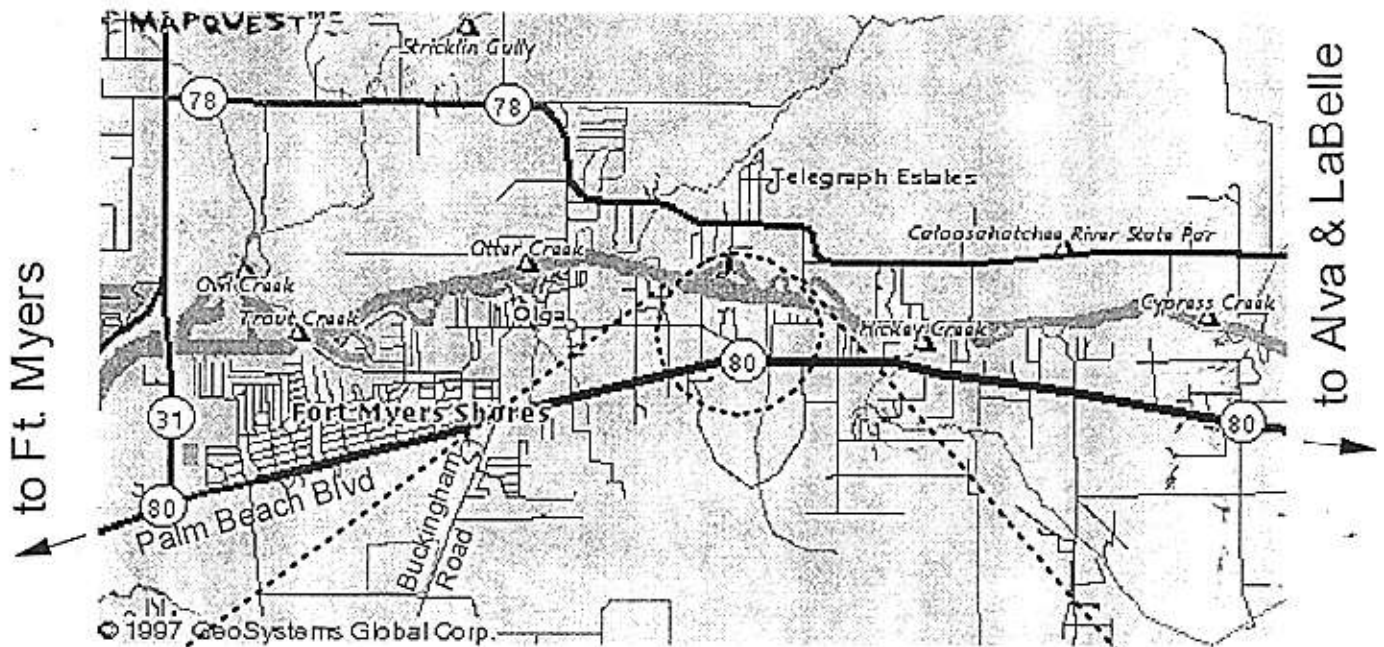
This is our annual membership event to introduce & elect the 1997 Riverwatch Board of Directors and Officers and to unveil upcoming events.
Dont miss it - Mark your calandars now!

Come by Car or Come by Boat.
Use the Map on the reverse to find us at the Pavillion.

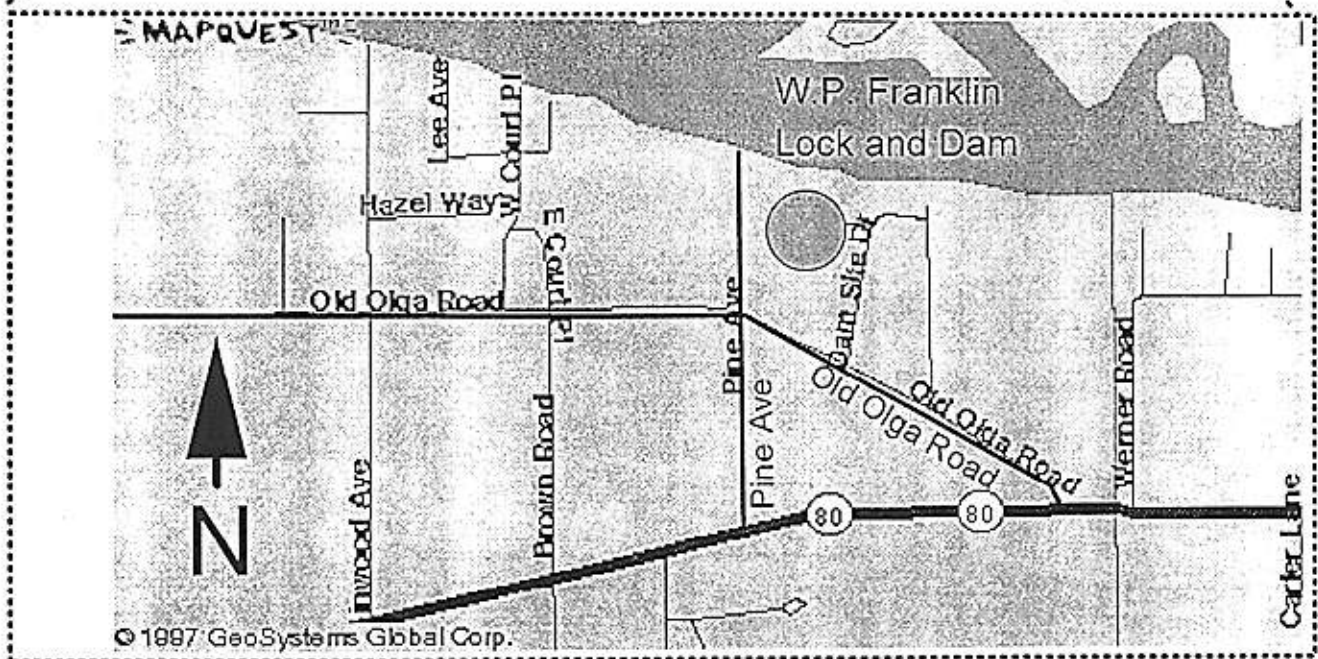
Bring your family, a dish to share and a lawn chair. See you there!
CRCA will supply plates, cups & utensils

Map to the W.P. Franklin Lock and Dam Recreation Area

Site of the 1997 CRCA Riverwatch Annual Meeting
SUNDAY, MARCH 2 at 12:30



To get to Franklin Lock, turn North off Hwy 80 onto Pine Ave
or Old Olga Road, approximately 1.5 miles East of the
intersection of Hwy 80 and Buckingham Road.



HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

Take a minute and check your mailing label. Do you see the date below your address? If there isn't one, or if it is February 1996 or earlier, your membership has expired! Please take a moment to fill out this form to keep your membership current. As you know, a citizens group like CRCA can not function out without your continued support.

Name: _____ Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: Home: _____ Work: _____ Fax: _____

New Member Renewing Membership Part-time FL Resident

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

Student \$5 (\$2.50) _____ Individual \$10 (\$5) _____ Family \$20 (\$10) _____

RIVER Friend \$50 (\$25) _____ RIVER Guardian \$100 (\$50) _____

RIVER Sponsor/Corporate \$250 (\$125) _____ RIVER Protector \$500 (\$250) _____

RIVER Champion \$1,000 (\$500) _____

* Please note, to simplify our records all memberships will now expire at the end of the year. Membership applications dated from July-October need only to pay the cost in parentheses.

Special Interests: Clerical Technical Membership

Education Projects & Events

Please mail to: CRCA
 Box 08004
 Ft. Myers, FL 33908-0004

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER FLOWS THROUGH CYBERSPACE

by John Cassani

The importance of the Caloosahatchee River as a resource to our region is well documented on the World Wide Web. A brief surfing session using the "Excite" search engine revealed 199 sites having Caloosahatchee AND River as search terms identified on various web sites.

Caloosahatchee River tide charts can be accessed by visiting (<http://www.fortmyers.org/tide.html>). Maybe you are looking for an airpark to move into that is close to the river, try (<http://www.4-1-1.com/navalair.html>). Take a Caloosahatchee River dinner cruise aboard the 600 passenger Captain J.P. or explore the Caloosahatchee River and Orange River aboard the 80 passenger Jungle Cruise (<http://www.floridatravel.com/attractions/jccruise.html>). You can find out what Caloosahatchee means to native American Calusas (black swift river) (<http://www.bridge.net/~jc72/nativename.html>). Need to know the best remaining riverfront property in North Fort

Myers? Try (<http://www.viprealty.com/rodg001.html>). Care to watch a sunset over the Caloosahatchee River while on the Seminole Gulf Railway Dinner Train? (<http://www.semgulf.com/DINNER.HTML>). History buffs can get a brief history of the river by visiting (<http://www.usa-chamber.com/capecoral/cape.html>).

Resource managers can learn how the Caloosahatchee River influences the Matlacha Pass estuary (<http://www.er.usgs.gov/HTML/SFLA/HTML/Reports/matlachha/description.html>). Information on the best bass fishing spots in the river can be determined by viewing (<http://www.fishingworld.com/bookvideo/BassWaterGuide.html>). If you want to know how much fresh water is being discharged from the river, visit the U.S. Geological Survey site (<http://h2o.usgs.gov/swr/FL/>).

As part of its new research initiative with the South Florida Water Management District, the University of Florida research center in Immokalee has set up a site describing its various Caloosahatchee River Basin projects (<http://www.imok.ufl.edu/wq/projects/caloosa/>).

Whatever your perspective, the Internet is an incredible source of information on just about anything. The Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association is contemplating the development of its own web site that will have links to other related sites. Stay tuned!

RIVERWATCH

Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association

P.O. Box 08004

Ft. Myers, FL 33908

CALOOSAHATCHEE
RIVER
Citizens Association

Southwest Florida Research and Education Center
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