

RIVERWATCH

NEWSLETTER

Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association (CRCA)

CRCA Info-line 433-4636 (x2722)

April, 1997

Editor: John Capece

Community Activism is Alive and Well

Last fall, a group of neighbors from Waterway Estates in North Fort Myers got together to discuss the state of their canals. They were especially concerned about the trash, grass clippings, palm fronds and oil film in the water. The group's consensus was that because of inadequate education and a lack of motivation, the residents of the area were causing a serious decline in the quality of water in the canals.

The group, calling themselves the *Do Not Feed the Canals Committee*, decided to create an educational program using "Keep It Clean: A Citizen's Guide to Protecting Our Estuary" as a guide. This booklet was produced in 1992 through grant funding and was written by Carla Kappmeyer from the Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Buffer Preserve.

A total of 305 households, the El Rio Golf Course and Calusa Isle Marina have pledged to honor the following practices:

- * Do not throw yard debris, grass cuttings, citrus or any other foreign matter into the canals
- * Cut down on the use of fertilizers and pesticides on lawns and trees
- * Keep sewer drains and street gutters free of dirt and vegetation
- * Maintain boat engines to avoid oil leaks
- * Read the "Keep It Clean" booklet

Watershed Weekend Events

April 13, April 19 and April 20

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The group has recruited Shuckers Restaurant and the Buttonwood Harbor subdivision to assist with canal clean ups. In addition, they have distributed the "Keep It Clean" booklet to the commercial landscapers who work in the area. This energetic group has also joined Keep Lee County Beautiful in the statewide Adopt A Shore program.

We salute the *Do Not Feed the Canals Committee* for their work. They are an inspiration to all of us! If you would like to learn more about the group, contact Don Skiba at 995-8075.

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River Cruise

Oxbows and RiverLore

On Sunday, April 20, 1997 Riverwatch members Rae Ann Scholle, Charles Edgar Foster and John Capece will be guiding an adventure back in time exploring the history, ecology and water quality of the Caloosahatchee oxbows.

The four-hour guided trip will include a personal tour of one of this area's (oldest local river groves and lunch aboard the *Delphina Mar* catamaran.

The boat will depart from the boat ramp on the north side of the river at the WP Franklin Lock & Dam park located off S.R. 78.

This trip is being offered through the Watershed Weekend Event organized by the Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium. If you are interested, sign up early because space is limited. To register, call the Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium at 275-3435 and ask for the Oxbows & RiverLore trip.

Legacy of the Caloosahatchee

Have you ever wondered about what the Caloosahatchee was like in the 1800's and around the turn of the century when steamboats were the primary means of transportation?

If so, then plan to attend the Watershed Weekend festivities on April 19 at the Calusa Nature Center & Planetarium. Charles Edgar Foster and Rae Ann Scholle will present a program on the history of the Caloosahatchee.

Caloosahatchee Research

On Wednesday April 30, Riverwatch will host a program focusing on current research studies being conducted along the Caloosahatchee. The program is designed to provide the public with the status and findings of various research projects which are being conducted by the South Florida Water Management District and University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

Come take advantage of this chance to learn more about the Caloosahatchee and ask questions of the researchers.

The program will be held at the Lee County Extension office in east Ft. Myers at Terry Park off SR 80. Food and drinks will be available at 6 p.m. and the program will begin at 6:30.

Upcoming Events

Sunday, April 13: JC Riverboat Cruise, for information call the Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium 275--3435.

Saturday, April 19: Watershed Weekend Presentations. For information call the Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium 275.3435.

Sunday, April 20: Oxbow & Riverlore Historic River Tour. For information call the Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium 275.3435.

Wednesday, April 30: First in a series of Caloosahatchee Research presentations by scientists from the SFWMD and University of Florida/IFAS at 6 p.m. in the Lee County Extension Office, on SR 80 at Terry Park. Food and drinks will be served.

Saturday, May 10: Caloosahatchee Regional Park Barbeque. RSVP requested, Lee County Parks, (941) 338-3343.

Welcome New Members

We are pleased to welcome our new and renewing members:

Ginger Allen
Addison Austin
Susan Beckman
Albert Bridell
Mike & Anita Buff
John Capece
Ron Costa
Dianna DeBoest
Rob & Joanne Fowler
Norma Greenberg
Joan Haverkate
Tom Jacques
Keith Kibbey
Harold Maupin
Robert Nicholson
Judith & Charles Paskvan
Larry Price
Robert Radar
Stuart Reynolds
Charlotte Schwartzel
Michael Simonik
Henry & Rhoda Spang
Edison Thuma
Chet Townsend
Jillian Wigdale

Rob Andrys
Jim Bates
Pamela Bowman
Steve Brookman
John & Freda Burke
Kitty Kern /Herk Carroll
Lyle Danielson
Charles E. Foster
Harry Green
Ron Hamel
Peggy Hellenbach
William Johnson
David Long
Michael McCartney
Laura O'Brien
Tom Perry
Pete Quasius
Russell Rehm
Rae Ann Scholle
JoAnne Schweinfurth
Bob & Edie Slayton
Bob & Ellen Steele
Tommy Toms
Sharon Page West

Watershed Weekend Events

April 13, April 19 and April 20

Celebrate "Watershed Weekend", Sunday, April 19 and Sunday, April 20 and join a sunset dinner cruise, Sunday, April 13. Events are sponsored by the Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium through a grant from the South Florida Water Management District.

Sunset Dinner Cruise on the Caloosahatchee Sunday, April 13, 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.: Enjoy an "all-u-care-to-eat" dinner buffet, informational exhibits about the river, and a keynote address by Dr. Robin Brown, author of Florida's First People, and Florida Fossils. The cost is \$25 for adults, \$11 for children age 3-11, children under 3 Free.

Community Forum at the Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium. Saturday, April 19, 10 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.: The forum will feature speakers, hands-on presentations, and exhibits about water and watershed issues. The forum is free, pre-registration is not required. A bike tour along the Ten Mile Canal bike path starts at 8:30 a.m. Cost is \$10 per person, includes Danish and juice, and requires pre-registration.

On-the Water Experiences, Various Times, Places, Fees, Sunday, April 20: These trips allow the public to explore Lee County watershed areas. All require reservations, pre-payment and include expert guides, equipment; some include snacks, beverages or lunch; prices range from \$5 to \$35. Trips include sea kayaking, pontoon and catamaran boat tours, a hike on Mound Key, and sunset and moonlight canoe trip and others.

For registration or information call the Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium, 275-3435.

ATTENTION ALL NATURE AND OUTDOORS LOVERS!!

Lee County Parks and Recreation is hosting a barbecue picnic lunch and orientation to introduce its new land stewardship volunteer program on Saturday, *May 10 at the Caloosahatchee Regional Park. The barbecue is free of charge, however your RSVP is requested. For more info. contact Jenny Lynn, at (941) 338-3343.

Plans to develop the Caloosahatchee Regional Park have recently been reinstated, only on a smaller scale than originally planned five years ago. The south side is currently being staked out by Casey Construction, and the SFWMD has evaluated the plans for any wetlands impact. There will be restrooms, a parking area, and hiking trails. On the north side, work is currently being done to get the land ready to be replanted with native vegetation. Right now, there are some hiking and equestrian trails.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection ANNOUNCEMENT

FLORIDA'S NATURAL RESOURCES NEED YOUR HELP...NOW!!

If you would like to take a more active role in the management's of Florida's protected coastal areas, call Carla Kappmeyer at (941)-283-2424. THANK YOU!

Manatee Protection

*It was not a good year for manatees,
or was it?*

You probably are aware that more manatees died in 1996 than in any previous year on record. That trend was true for the State, the region, and the Caloosahatchee River. Scientists who work with manatees on a regular basis now believe that the tremendous die off last spring was the result of chronic exposure to red tide toxin. Events such as red tide and cold weather are not presently within our control, however, a record number of manatees were also killed within Lee County by collisions with boats. While collisions with boats may never be completely preventable, many people, including the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, believe that they can be minimized. In an effort to do just that, FDEP has begun the process of developing boat speed restrictions for extensive areas of Lee County. This may be a long and difficult undertaking. It was attempted in 1994 and ultimately was defeated in court. The basic reason that the previous attempt failed was because the FDEP failed to show that they considered all of the impacts in a systematic and objective process.

Part of that process is you! The FDEP invests significant resources in tracking and monitoring manatee activity. They try to understand the animals in order to understand what they need to survive. It is more difficult for them to understand the human portion of the equation. The FDEP cannot legally cause "undue interference" on the citizens of Lee County in order to protect the manatees that live here. The only way they can understand what the impacts are to boaters, anglers, and waterfront residents (people like you) is for you to become part of the process. The FDEP will be working toward a public hearing in Lee County sometime this Spring. It is up to us to help find the middle ground. There is room for manatees and humans on our waterways. The question is, are we willing to look for it?

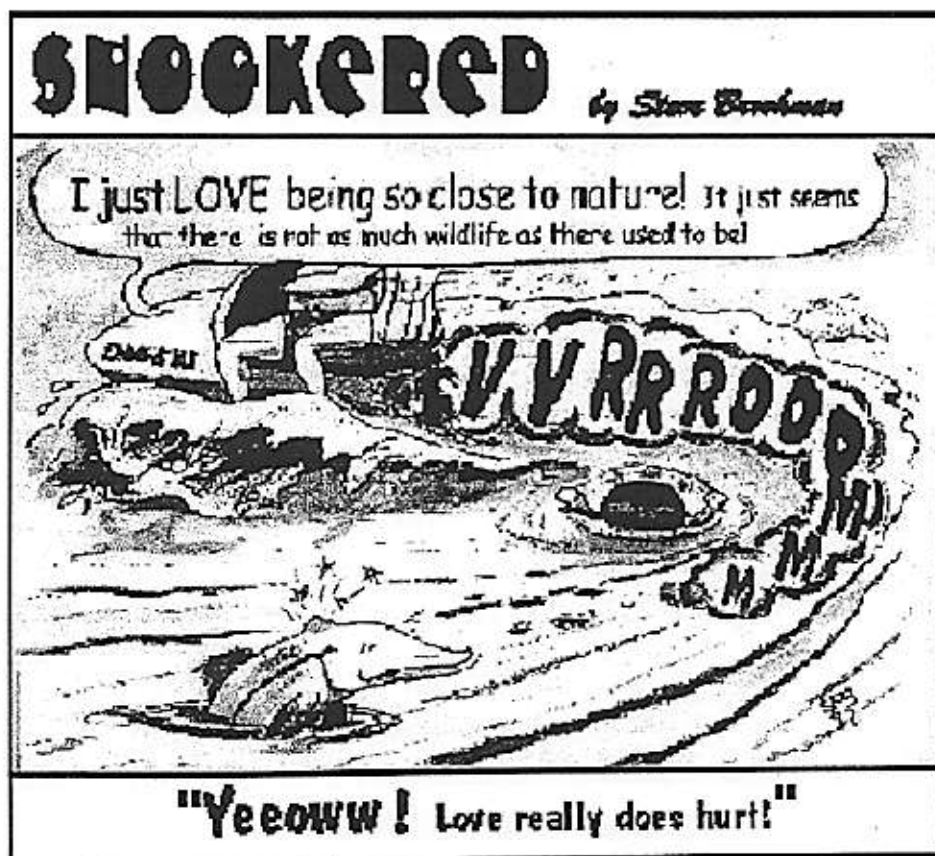
The manatee has been in Florida for 45 million years. Some

believe that its days are almost over. The manatee is an indication of the health of our estuaries. What we do in the name of manatee protection can ultimately impact our lives directly. It is time for all of us to consider the future, we would like for our rivers and coastal waters, and the manatees. And then we need to decide what we are willing to sacrifice. Is it 20 minutes of our boating day or maybe taking the time to pick up tangled fishing line? Is that something we are willing to do to make our future better?

Last year was the worst on record for manatee deaths, but this January, more manatees were counted on the west coast of Florida than ever before. Nature is resilient - to a point. Make your decision and make your opinion part of the process to help make a better future a reality.

More information about manatees and manatee protection can be obtained at the following:

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Protected Species Management
3900 Commonwealth Blvd., MS 245
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000
(904) 922-4330



One
Jillian W.



LOGO CONTEST

ENTER TODAY!!!

FIRST PRIZE

THE POSSIBILITY OF WINNING
7 MILLION DOLLARS
(ONE LOTTERY TICKET)

AND A

FREE RIVERBOAT TOUR

HOSTED BY OUR PRESIDENT RAE ANN SCHOLLE AND CHARLES FOSTER

THE DETAILS:

THE CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER CITIZENS ASSOCIATION 'RIVERWATCH' IS SPONSORING A CONTEST FOR THE BEST LOGO FOR OUR ASSOCIATION. THE TOP FIVE ENTRIES AS SELECTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL BE PLACED IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER. THE MEMBERS AT LARGE WILL THEN VOTE FOR THEIR FAVORITE LOGO. SEND ALL ENTRIES TO OUR MAILING ADDRESS ON THE NEWSLETTER, April 30, 1997

PROJECTS SPONSORED BY RIVERWATCH

HISTORIC MARKER TOUR:

CONTACT: RAE ANN SCHOLLE OR CHARLES FOSTER

RIVER CRUISES - HISTORICAL & ECOLOGICAL:

CONTACT: Rae Ann Scholle

STORM DRAIN STENCILING:

CONTACT: PAH BOWMAN OR LAURA O'BRIEN

RIVER BARGE CLEAN UP:

CONTACT: MIKE MCGARTHEY

BOATER EDUCATION / WATER QUALITY:

CONTACT: ROB ANDRYS

ONE OF OUR PROJECTS THIS YEAR IS TO HAVE SCHOOL CHILDREN DESIGN WATER-PROOF POSTERS THAT WILL BE PLACED AT MARINAS AND BOAT RAMPS. THEY WILL DESCRIBE WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE SPILLS OIL IN THE RIVER AND WHY IT IS BAD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.

IMPLEMENTATION

THIS PROJECT GROUP WOULD ORGANIZE THE FOLLOWING.

SCHOOL CHILDREN TO DESIGN THE POSTERS USING OUR DATA
(WE HAVE SCHOOL TEACHERS ON STAFF)

CONTACT MARINE RELATED INDUSTRIES FOR SPONSORSHIP AND DISPLAY OF POSTERS.

CONTACT AREA SERVICE CLUBS (I.E. KIWANIS, ROTARY, ECT) TO TAKE ON INSTALLATION OF POSTERS AS THEIR PROJECT.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO HAVE FUN, MEET INTERESTING PEOPLE AND HELP THE RIVER.

A WORD ABOUT OUR PROJECTS

THE CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER CITIZENS ASSOCIATION HAS MORE IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO HELP MAKE THE RIVER A BETTER PLACE, THAN IT HAS PEOPLE TO DO THE WORK. WE THEREFORE WILL BE PUTTING OUR ENERGY INTO NETWORKING WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO COMMUNICATE THESE IDEAS, PROVIDE THE TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND BE THERE WHEN THEY NEED HELP.

Oxbow Research Wins Award

Congratulations to Miss Heather Townsend of LaBelle High School for her award-winning science fair project investigating changes in the Caloosahatchee oxbows. Heather's project was selected from among all regional science fair environmental entries to receive the senior division "Senator's Choice Award" from Senator Tom Rossin. Also attending the Senate Council 35 luncheon where Heather received her award were Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Virginia Wetherell, Senator Fred Dudley, Ft. Myers Mayor Bruce Grady, and many other regional dignitaries.

The oxbows are the only remaining sections of the original Caloosahatchee River which to survived the dredging and creation of the current C-43 (Caloosahatchee) waterway. In addition to their historical and aesthetic value, the oxbows are important ha-

Caloosahatchee fish and wildlife. Heather's science fair project combined data collected by *Riverwatch* and University of Florida teams on 18 oxbows with data she personally collected from 15 oxbows. With scientific guidance from Dr. John Capece of UF/IFAS and Mrs. Susan Cooper of LaBelle High School, Heather performed a statistical comparison of these recent data with data from a 1978 SFWMD report and found evidence of changes in the oxbows. While many individual oxbows showed evidence of degradation due to sediment accumulation in the channel bottoms, there was not a statistically significant pattern of sedimentation across all oxbows. However, Heather did find that the measured changes in the oxbow channel widths were statistically significant across the full set of oxbows. These results are evidence of an on-going bank erosion process. Heather's findings will help point the way towards future investigations of the oxbows and projects to protect this important part of our river.

Annual Meeting

Thanks to all the participants who made the Annual Meeting a success! We enjoyed sharing poster presentations which ranged from an award winning science fair display on the oxbows and a wastewater discharge study to an exhibit by the Alva Museum highlighting little known Caloosahatchee history.

The membership elected to the Board of Directors the slate of 18 nominees proposed by the nominating committee. The Board then elected new officers including: Rae Ann Scholle, President, Steve Boutelle, Vice President, Jim Haggart, Secretary and Bill McGrath, Treasurer.

Besides providing us with a wonderful setting (the Franklin Locks) on a beautiful day for our annual business meeting, the gathering allowed us to visit, meet and exchange ideas with many new faces.

CRCA Officers

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

CRCA Directors

Rob Andrys	Susan Beckman
Pam Bowman	John Cassani
Peggy Hellenbach	Butch Jones
Keith Kibbey	Erick Lindblad
Win Everham	Mike McCartney
Luara O'Brien	T.C. Porter
Walter Stephens, Jr	Laura Wewerka

CRCA Committee Chairs

Technical:	J. Capece - W. Everham
Community Forum:	J. Cassani
Membership:	P. Hellenbach
Projects & Events:	L. O'Brien - P. Bowman
Public Affairs:	J. Haggart - J. Cassani
Speakers Bureau	T.C. Porter

RIVERWATCH
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CALOOSAHATCHEE
RIVER
Citizens Association

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Immokalee, FL 33934

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This edition of the CRCA newsletter was produced with assistance from Florida Gulf Coast University and from University of Florida Southwest Florida Research and Education Center as a Jillian voice to the community.


FLORIDA
GULF COAST