

RIVERWATCH NEWSLETTER

Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association (CRCA)

CRCA Info-Line 433-4636(x2722)

September 1997

Spanish Creek Channelized *CRCA fights for restoration* by Rae Ann Scholle

Spanish Creek is a narrow meandering tributary to the Caloosahatchee located in the north shore of the river east of Alva.

The natural creek was bordered by stately, overhanging live oaks and tall, graceful cypress trees. The stream bed supplied diverse habitat areas for numerous protected species of birds and mammals in its shallow, rocky ripple areas, natural cypress islands and quiet stream pools. Wood stork, limpkin, white ibis, little blue herons, snowy egrets, tri-colored herons and river otter have made the creek their home and utilized its rich food supply.

However, in March of this year an adjacent property owner, the County Line Drainage District, a 298 Water Control District, channelized a portion of the creek without any of the required State or Federal Permits.

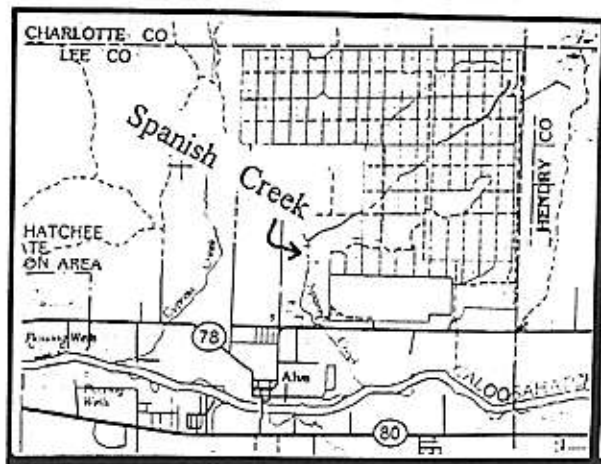
The work involved a trackhoe which dug out the bottom of the creek, destroyed a cypress island in the middle of the creek and piled the spoil several feet deep over hundreds of oak and cypress trees which had been pushed down along the banks of the creek. Subsequent erosion of the steep spoil banks contributed to deteriorating water quality and a serious algae bloom. The work destroyed feeding areas used by wading birds and silted over the rich bivalve supply used by otters. The hard sand bottom of the creek has been replaced by silt and muck.

The CLDD admits to doing the work. They performed similar work two years ago which resulted in the channelization of a portion of Spanish

Creek and all of Millers Gully, a smaller tributary to the east.

CRCA has been working with the Spanish Creek homeowners to speak up for the resource to assure that this natural feature is restored to its prior condition. We have met with the Corps of Engineers, South Florida Water Management District and County Commissioners. We can use your help to encourage these regulatory agencies to insist on nothing less than full restoration. The main agency working on a restoration review at this writing is the Army Corps of Engineers.

Letters and/or phone calls insisting on support of full restoration efforts should be directed to Mr. Larry Evans, Enforcement, Army Corps of Engineers, P.O. Box 4970, Jacksonville, FL 32232. Fax: 904.232.1684. The local reviewer, Chip Clough can also be reached by phone: 334.1975 or fax: 334.0797. The site is in Lee County Commissioner John Albions District 3352225 he and Commissioner Ray Judah are assisting in our restoration efforts. Your voice on this issue will make a difference and set an example for future situations. Often our role is a lonely voice in support of the needs of the resource, so it needs to be louder than the rest. As a unified force we can help get Spanish Creek restored.



Buquebus Update

The Ft. Myers to Key West Ferry

by Jim Haggart

Members of Riverwatch have met with the representatives of Buquebus, the Argentinean company which intends to begin high-speed ferry service between downtown Ft. Myers and Key West early in 1998. Our purpose was to begin gathering information about the impact of the project on the Caloosahatchee River.

When fully operational, Buquebus proposes to run two round-trips daily, with two jet powered vessels capable of top speeds of 70 mph. One will be 147 feet long and will displace 520 tons, and the other will be over 200 feet long and will displace 750 tons. Buquebus expects to make a one way trip, a distance of approximately 150 miles, in about three hours. The first leg of the trip from Ft. Myers will take the vessel down the Okechobee Waterway channel, from the city docks through the restricted-speed area around Big Shell Island to the Sanibel Causeway. As boaters familiar with the area know, much of this channel is relatively narrow. Buquebus says it plans to make this leg of the trip at an *average* speed of about 25 mph.

At this point Riverwatch has the following concern:

- * **Boater Safety.** The relatively large size and high speed of the Buquebus vessel may create hazardous boating conditions, especially where the channel is narrow.

- * **Marine habitat.** The vessel's jet engine propels water at an initial velocity of 500 mph. The larger vessels has a draft of seven feet. Buquebus has identified "turn-out" areas outside of the channel, which it's vessel will use when necessary to avoid other boat traffic. The effect of these conditions on marine habitats is unknown at this point. Also unknown is the impact which the vessels wakes will have on mangroves and other habitats along the shoreline.

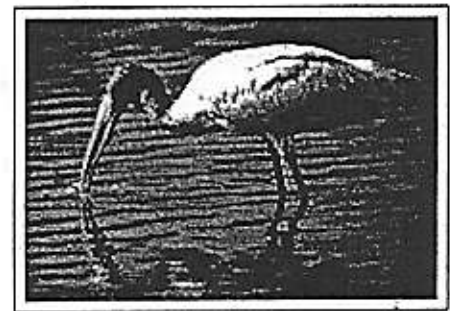
- * **Marine Life.** The dangers to the manatees and the other marine life from collisions,

increased turbulence, jet emissions, noise, etc. have not been evaluated.

- * **Water Quality.** The City of Ft. Myers intends to build fueling facilities, including storage tanks, for the Buquebus at the city docks. Riverwatch is concerned about potential pollution of the river from these facilities.

Within the next month Riverwatch members plan to meet with other interested organizations and agencies to discuss our concerns and arrive at an action plan which addresses them. We will update our members again in the next newsletter. If you have question or comments in the meantime, please call our infoline at

941-433-4636, ext. 2722.



The Wood Stork

Vince McGrath

Since the turn of the century, man's influence on the environment has frequently been devastating. Birds are a good example of this impact. However, because it is true that we learn best from our mistakes, we now have a clear cut job to do in recovering lost numbers of one of the great flocks of birds.

In 1900, there were about 150,000 wood storks in Florida. Today, just 7,000 to 10,000 remain. The most famous collection of wood storks is the colony at the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary in Collier County. One of these small colonies was recently discovered (in 1992) on an island on the Caloosahatchee River. The colony is located in Lee County on a mangrove island just south of the power plant in the vicinity of Daughtery Creek. Traditionally, wood storks are common along our coast and in the wetlands in the winter, so with a summering colony we can now enjoy "Old Flinthead" year round.

WAIVER

ASSUMPTION OF RISK

I voluntarily request permission to participate in the Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association River Ride bicycle event. I certify that my level of physical conditioning is appropriate to complete the event and that there are no known medical reasons why I should not participate. I understand that it is mandatory that I wear a bicycle helmet during the ride. I understand and there are risks inherent in my participation in this event and injuries including, but not limited to, abrasions, broken bones, lacerations and even death do occasionally occur in events of this type. I recognize that it is my responsibility to follow the rules and instructions set forth by the organizers and officials of the event and that not doing so may increase the chance of injury occurring.

In consideration of permission to participate in this cycle ride, I for my heirs, executors, administrators, legal representatives and assigns do hereby discharge, release and hold harmless the Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association from all liability arising out of or connected in any way with my participation or that of a family member in this event.

In addition, I the undersigned parent and/or guardian, hereby give authorization to the Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association or any medical health care facility to treat my minor child, _____, as needed for any injury or illness occurring to said minor child. Further, under penalty of perjury, I certify that I am the father/mother/guardian of the above named minor.

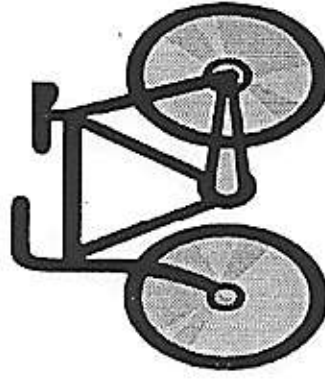
Signature (If under 18 parent/guardian must sign)

date



CRCA Riverwatch
P.O. Box 1165
Fort Myers, Florida 33902

THE
MAILING
ADDRESS
GOES
HERE



The Caloosahatchee River
Citizens Association

presents the

1997 First Annual

Caloosahatchee River Ride

Sunday November 16, 1997

8:00 A.M.

Fort Myers, Florida

Join us for Caloosahatchee River Ride

An Invitation

Join members of the Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association (Rivernatch) on their first annual bicycle ride along the Caloosahatchee River, Sunday, November 16, 1997. This event is designed to allow participants to enjoy the Caloosahatchee's watershed and scenic beauty. The ride begins at the Lee County Sheriff's Posse on Palm Creek Rd. off Bayshore Road near SR 31, and follows back roads to LaBelle, and back.

What is the CRCA

The Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the River and its watershed, through education and promotion of the responsible use and enjoyment for all of the people.

Distance Options

There will be a 15, 28 and 62 mile option. This will allow cyclists of all levels to enjoy the ride.

The Course

The course is flat with scenic views of the river at the Franklin Locks, Fort Demand Bridge and in LaBelle. Rest stops will be provided along the way stocked with drinks and refreshments.

Support

The course will have a support vehicle to assist with mechanical problems.

Registration

All registrations received by Friday, October 31, are guaranteed an event T-shirt. Please appreciate that providing adequate food and refreshment for the event is difficult. Pre registration is preferred.

Cost

\$10 for CRCA members, and \$15 for non-members. This fee includes maps, rest stop food and refreshments, and support vehicles. It also includes an event T-shirt if received by October 31. A \$5.00 late fee will be added for all registrations received after that date.

The Start

The ride starts from 8:00 to 8:30 A.M. at the Lee County Sheriff's Posse Ranch on Palm Creek Rd. off Bayshore Road just West of the Lee County Civic Center.

Helmets and Safety

This is not a race. All traffic laws must be obeyed. An ANSI approved helmet must be worn while riding. Headphones are not only illegal, but extremely dangerous.

Information

For more information, please call 941-433-4636 Extension #2722 and the event chairman will contact you

This event is being held in concert with the Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association annual public forum to be held Saturday November 22, 1997 at the Hall of Fifty States, Downtown Fort Myers.

The Goals and objectives of Rivernatch are:

- To strive to improve the River from its source to its mouth, including its impacts on riparian and estuarine systems, wildlife habitat, and marine life.
- To promote public education concerning the historical significance, present condition, and future of the River and its watershed.
- To increase public awareness of the importance of the River to our quality of life.
- To study the effect of domestic, commercial, and agricultural uses of the River's resources.
- To monitor and work to improve the River's water quality, quantity, and flow characteristics.
- To observe and participate in the activities of public bodies responsible for the management of the River and its watershed.



Registration Form

One person per form.

Please print legibly or use address label.

Photocopy as needed, trim to size.

(If photocopied please copy waiver on reverse)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State & Zip _____

Day Phone _____

Evening Phone _____

Emergency Contact _____

Ride _____ 15 mi. _____ 28 mi. _____ 62 mi.

T-Shirt Size

\$ _____ M _____ L _____ XL

CRCA Members \$10.00

Non-members \$15.00

Late Fee (After 10-31) \$ 5.00

CRCA Individual Membership \$10.00

Total _____

Make checks payable to: CRCA

MAIL FORM AND CHECK TO:

CRCA Rivernatch

P.O. Box 1165

Fort Myers, FL 33902

Return with check, payable to Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association, P.O. Box 1165, Ft. Myers, FL 33902.

_____ River Protector \$ 500. _____ River Champion \$ 1,000.
_____ River Friend \$ 50. _____ River Guardian \$ 100. _____ River Sponsor/Corporate \$ 250.
_____ Student \$ 5. _____ Individual \$ 10. _____ Family \$ 20. _____ Other \$ _____
_____ Telephone: Home _____ Work _____ Fax _____
_____ City: _____ County: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
_____ Name: _____ Address: _____

~~~~~ Membership Invitation ~~~~~

## Riverwatch

P.O. Box 1165  
Ft. Myers, FL 33902

*You Are Invited to Join*

# *Riverwatch*

~~~~~  
Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead

The Caloosahatchee Legacy

Today, the Caloosahatchee flows from Lake Okeechobee in Glades County through Hendry and Lee Counties to the Gulf of Mexico. The water feeding the Caloosahatchee is shared by Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades and supplies drinking water to metropolitan areas on the east coast including Miami, Ft. Lauderdale & West Palm Beach.

The Caloosahatchee was not historically connected to Lake Okeechobee. Its headwaters were located at Lake Flirt, east of present day LaBelle, perched 4 feet above the western Caloosahatchee valley. Water tumbled out of Lake Flirt over a water fall and 1/4 mile of rapids to travel the crooked river to the Gulf.

Together with its life giving force, the Caloosahatchee has, locked within its banks, the tales of soldiers and Indians, outposts and settlements, magnates and murderers. Join us and learn more about how you can help protect the River and preserve its legacy.

Mission Statement

The Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the integrity of the River and its watershed, through education and promotion of their responsible use and enjoyment by all of the people.

Goals & Objectives

To strive to improve the River from its source to its mouth, including its impacts on riparian and estuarine systems, wildlife habitat, fisheries and marine life.

To promote public education concerning the historical significance, present condition and future of the River and its watershed.

To increase public awareness of the importance of the River to our quality of life.

To study the effect of domestic, commercial and agricultural uses of the River's resources.

To monitor and work to improve the River's water quality, quantity and flow characteristics.

To observe and participate in the activities of public bodies responsible for the management of the River and its watershed.

Get Involved

Committees and Projects

Projects

Storm Drain Stenciling
Historic Marker Tour
River Barge Clean Up
Boaters/Water Quality Program

Technical

Library Collection
Infonet Web Site

Public Affairs

Membership

Newsletter

Community Forum

Speakers Bureau

Upcoming Events

Saturday, October 4
Caloosahatchee Regional Park:

Come out on Saturday, October 4th to visit and contribute to the making of the park. CRCA was instrumental in negotiating with the Corps of Engineers and County Parks to forge a partnership to clean up and restore the park. The Corps has contributed a large front end loader and operator, CRCA volunteer personnel and ongoing commitment and the Parks Dept. seedlings, grant funding and volunteers. See you there.

Sunday, October 26

"Monofilament Fishing Line Clean Up"

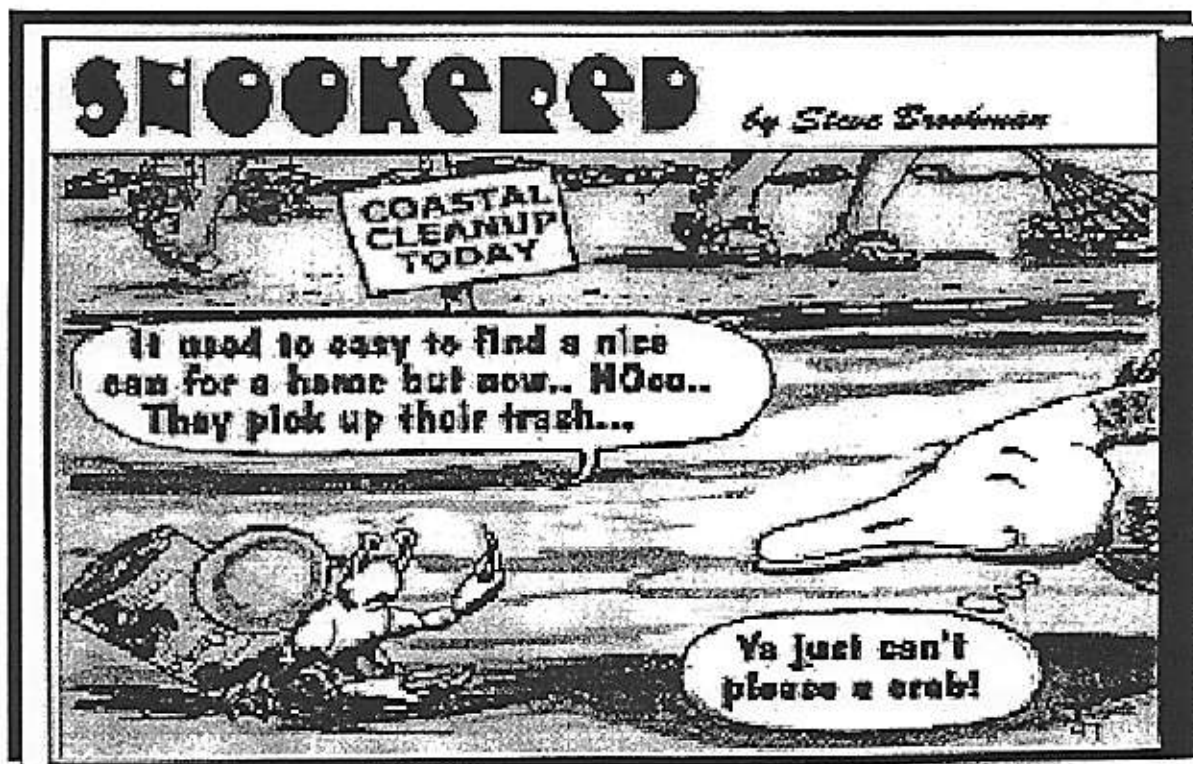
sponsored by Keep Lee County Beautiful will take place on Sunday, October 26, 1997. In the past members of the Riverwatch have participated in boats, kayaks and canoes to clean up the monofilament and other debris from the Caloosahatchee. The garbage is collected at the marina on large barges. There will be a noon BBQ picnic at Tarpon Point Marina in Cape Coral for all volunteers sponsored by Sam Galloway Ford. For more information call Keep Lee County Beautiful at 941-334-3488.

Community Forum set for
November 22, 1997

The Forum Committee, consisting of most of the Board of Directors, has been busy organizing the upcoming Forum on November 22, 1997. Having the Forum in November is a switch from our traditional meeting in Spring. The reason for this is to hold the Forum in conjunction with the American Water Resource Association (AWRA) which will feature many presentations on the Caloosahatchee River. The AWRA meeting will take place on Friday, November 21, 1997 at the Sheraton hotel, the day before the CRCA Forum which will be across the street at the Hall Of Fifty Sates.

The program for this year Forum promises to be memorable and will feature the first public viewing of WGPU's documentary on the Caloosahatchee River. A panel of experts on the river will discuss the varied issues affecting almost every resident of the region in some way or another. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions of the panel. In addition, there will be numerous displays and exhibits including the DEP manatee rescue boat among others relating to some aspect of the River. Residents that live on or near the River will have the opportunity to bring in water samples for analysis.

** Mark your calendars and plan to attend this exciting event **



Welcome New Members

We are pleased to welcome our new and renewing members:

Name:	Membership Catagory:
Hans Wilson	Family
Richard G. Bashaw	Individual
Joe Mulvihill	Individual
Norm Uransky	Renewal Individual
John Majdiak	Renewal Individual

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RIVERWATCH

Caloosahatchee River Citizens
Association
P.O. Box 1165
Ft. Myers, FL 33902

CRCA Officers

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

CRCA Directors

Rob Andrys	Susan Beckman
Pam Porter	John Cassani
Peggy Hellenbach	Butch Jones
Keith Kibbey	Erick Lindblad
Win Everham	Mike McCartney
Laura 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. Porter
Public Affairs:	J. Haggart - J. Cassani
Speakers Bureau	T.C. Porter

Caloosahatchee River Citizens
Association
CRCA Info-line 433-4636 (x2722)

CALOOSAHATCHEE
RIVER
Citizens Association