

# RIVERWATCH

Caloosahatchee River Citizen's Association

CRCA Info-Line (941) 433-4636

March, 1998

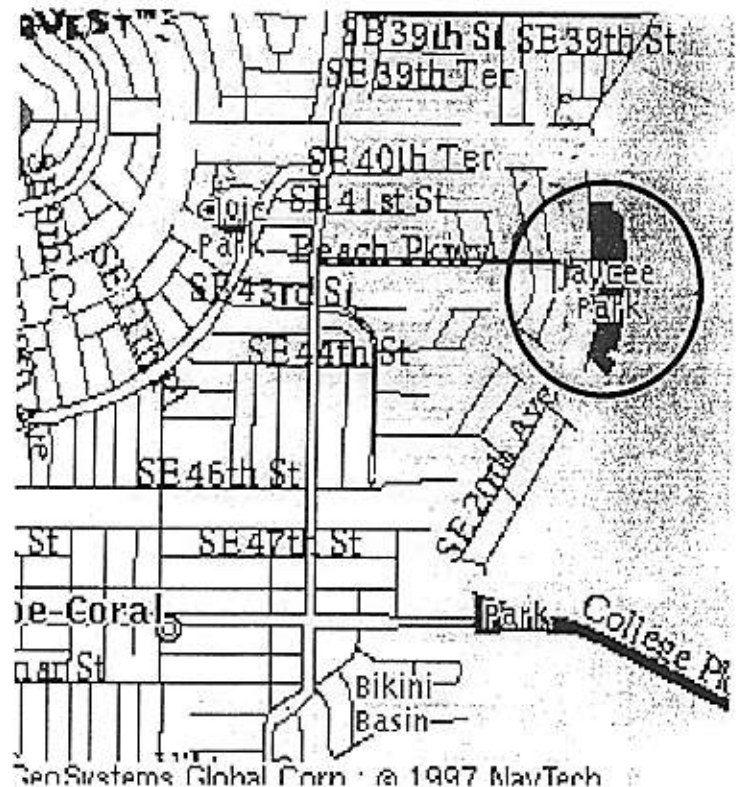
## Annual Meeting Set For March 8<sup>th</sup>

Come join your fellow RiverWatch members, friends and family at our annual meeting on Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup> at Jaycee Park in Cape Coral. We will enjoy our river view from the North Pavilion starting at noon, and we'll stay until about 4:00 p.m. This will be a potluck luck affair. Everyone is encouraged to bring your own main dish and a side dish to share. Grills will be available if you would like to cook out. Drinks and utensils will be provided.

We will conduct our annual business meeting, elect new members to the Board of Directors and elect Officers for the coming year. We will also bring in some expert advisors to teach us a thing or two about what we can do on an individual and group basis to help protect and improve the Caloosahatchee River.

There will be plenty of time to relax and enjoy the park and the river, so plan to attend! If you need more information, please call Steve Boutelle at 731-6994. We hope to see you there!

Jaycee Park, the site of our Annual Meeting, is at the end of Beach Parkway. Take Del Prado Boulevard and then turn east on to Beach Parkway.



## Bike Through a Cypress Sanctuary

Come bike with us through the Greenbrier Sanctuary on Sunday March 29! This will be a ride on paved roads that wind in and out of the many cypress heads in the Greenbrier area of north Lehigh Acres. There is very little traffic on these roads, so stopping to admire and explore the cypress heads will be easy. We will flag a particularly interesting spot for exploring. This is a Bring Your Own Everything ride. We will meet at 1:00 p.m. at the corner of Greenbrier Road and Lake Ridge Blvd. (1/2 mile off Joel Blvd). To get there, take highway 80 to Joel Blvd. (SR 34) and travel south 3 miles until you see the sign 'Greenbrier' on the west side of the road. If you are coming through Lehigh, Lee Blvd. becomes Leeland Blvd., which becomes Joel Blvd. Continue through town heading north, Greenbrier is 5 miles out of town. For more information about this ride, call Rob Andrys at 728-2807.

# A Year of Riverwatching: Our 1997 Accomplishments

Rae Ann Scholle, President

1997 was a productive year for Riverwatch. A great educational product, a movie about the Caloosahatchee, was begun! Thanks to Board member John Cassani who peaked the interest of WGCU TV Producer Cleo Garcia and involved the resources of our organization to help. The pilot video was unveiled at our November, 1997 Community Forum and will be made into a full scale PBS Program.

Thanks to Board member Keith Kibbey and our sponsors we completed our 1st Annual bike ride. This very successful and enjoyable event allowed us to introduce people with a variety of interests to the history and geography of the Caloosahatchee.

In keeping with our mission to protect the integrity of the river and its watershed through education and promotion of responsible use, we held a town hall meeting to make current information and research about the river available to our members and the public. We also researched, investigated, commented and participated in numerous projects affecting the Caloosahatchee including evaluating the Buquebus high speed ferry, working to correct the illegal dredging of Spanish Creek and reviewing the master plans for Lehigh drainage, which affects Bedman and Hickey Creeks and the Orange River.

Grant support from the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce helped us start a new Historic Marker tour to document the history of the Caloosahatchee, which we also share with the community through slide presentations about the Caloosahatchee, our predecessors and the history of the region.

We continued to teach the public about the Caloosahatchee through our unique oxbow river cruises which included a Sense of Place trip for the faculty of Florida Gulf Coast

University. In addition, our participation with the community on various advisory committees has assured widespread attention to the Caloosahatchee. Some of the groups where Riverwatch members serve include the Caloosahatchee Water Management Advisory Committee, SFWMD Environmental Advisory Committee, Governors Commission, Estuary Program Technical Advisory Committee & Citizens Advisory Committee, Agency on Bay Management, ECOSWF, Conservation 2020, LASAC, Council of Civic Associations, RGMC, IFAS, Agroecology Advisory Committee and LeeSEEC.

From my perspective, our greatest and most important achievement has been our success as a grassroots citizen's organization to establish ourselves with the public, environmental, agricultural and development groups and governing officials as a conscientious, credible and responsible group working for the betterment of a natural resource. Margaret Mead said it best and has often been quoted for her observation: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

I would like to hear your thoughts about our organization. What have you enjoyed in our programs? What would you be interested in getting involved in? (We could use help with grant writing, interviewers for our Oral Histories and writers for our book, stencilers for storm drains and artists for designs) How can we be more effective? Share your ideas with me so that we can be stronger advocates in pursuing our Mission.

Drop us a line or call our phone mail and let us know your thoughts.

# Buquebus Bulletin

Jim Haggart

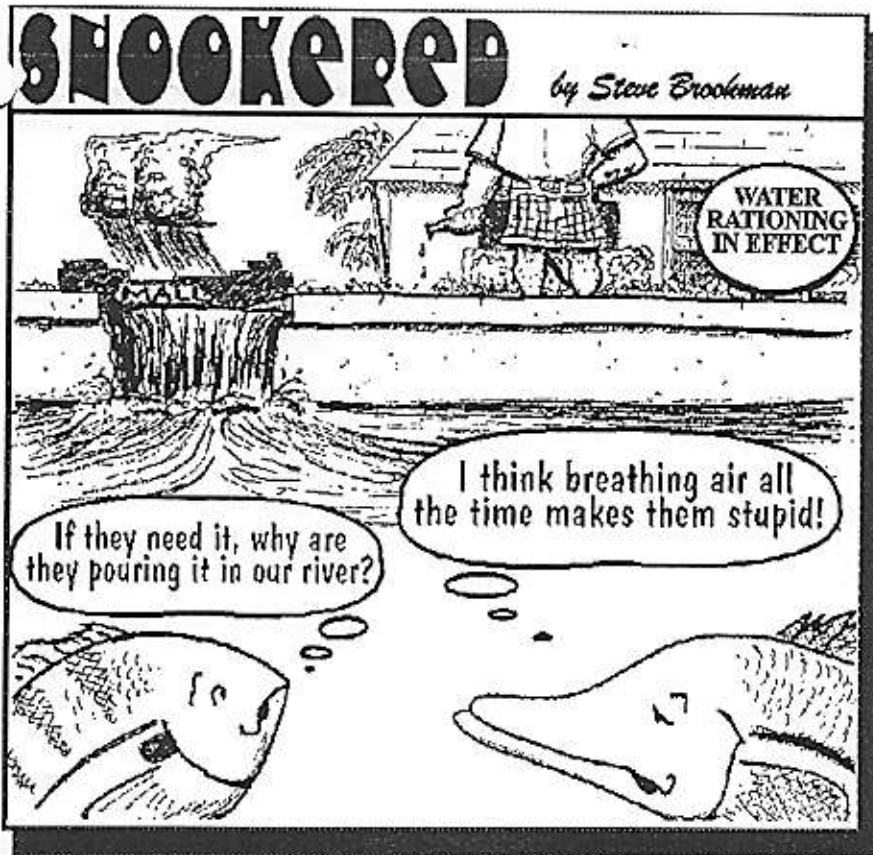
Members of the Caloosahatchee River Citizen's Association are continuing to monitor the progress of the Buquebus project. You may recall that Buquebus is planning to operate high speed passenger and ferry service between Fort Myers and Key West. The route between the Fort Myers city docks and the Sanibel causeway will be through the Intracoastal Waterway channel in the Caloosahatchee River.

The proposed Buquebus vessels range in size from 147 feet to 210 feet in length, and weigh more than 500 tons. They are capable of speeds in excess of 45 mph, and are expected to make the trip between Fort Myers and Key West in about three hours.

The vessels are scheduled to negotiate the channel in the Caloosahatchee River between the Fort Myers city docks and the Sanibel causeway in about 45 minutes.

Buquebus originally planned to begin passenger service this winter, but recently announced that the service would begin in the fall of 1998.

Representatives of the Caloosahatchee River Citizen's Association plan to meet again with Buquebus officials this month to discuss our concerns about water safety, impacts on habitat and marine life and water quality. We'll continue to keep you posted.



## Welcome! New and Returning Members

Chan Baichoo  
Patti Bennett  
Margaret Bishop  
Albert Bridell  
Ana Coyle  
Norma and Dick Dawdy  
Patrick Gostel  
Angie Hamilton  
Pat Henderson  
Maran Brainard Hilgendorf  
Caroline LeGette  
Ann McCullough  
Bette E. Milison  
George Miller  
Dennis Morgan  
Julia Pate  
Ralph Spoor  
Save the Manatee Club  
Southwest Angler's Club

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## Membership Invitation

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Category:

\$5 Student \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 Individual \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 Family \_\_\_\_\_  
\$50 River Friend \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 River Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ \$250 River Sponsor/Corporate \_\_\_\_\_  
\$500 River Protector \_\_\_\_\_ \$1000 River Champion \_\_\_\_\_

To join the Caloosahatchee River Citizen's Association, complete this form and submit it with your check (payable to CRCA) to P.O. Box 1165, Fort Myers, Florida 33902.

Contributions are tax deductible. Thank you for your interest in helping to protect the River!

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### Are You A Net Surfer? Check Out These Pages!

[www.restudy.org](http://www.restudy.org)

[www.ojibwe.pvt.k12.mn.us/riverwatch.dir/waterres.html](http://www.ojibwe.pvt.k12.mn.us/riverwatch.dir/waterres.html)

[www.teleport.com/~triverk/](http://www.teleport.com/~triverk/)

[www.nfrcg.gov/](http://www.nfrcg.gov/)

[www.sfwmd.gov](http://www.sfwmd.gov) →

[www.ficus.usf.edu](http://www.ficus.usf.edu)

If you find a site which you think other Riverwatch members might find interesting, let us know and we'll spread the word!

# Manatees Are in Hot Water

Rob Andrys

The manatees that winter in the warm discharge waters from the Florida Power and Light (FP&L) power plant off the Caloosahatchee River and the Orange River are at the center of a power struggle between FP&L and the Southwest Florida Marine Trades Association. The Association contends that the warm water attracts unusually large numbers of manatees to this area that would have otherwise sought warmer waters to the south of Fort Myers. The Association has asked that the Florida Department of Environmental Protection not renew the warm water discharge permit.

The Caloosahatchee River Citizen's Association has not taken a stand on this issue, but any action taken clearly would have an impact on the Caloosahatchee's ecosystem. Our concern is that these impacts may not have been adequately defined.

We have sent a letter asking the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to address the following issues raised by the Marine Trades Association.

\* Has there been, or are there plans to study the long term impacts on the manatees as a result of their dense congregation at this artificial refuge? What are the relative benefits and costs to the manatees and other aquatic organisms that are caused by this discharge?

\* Has there been a study of the shift in the manatee population since the FP&L thermal discharge was first authorized?

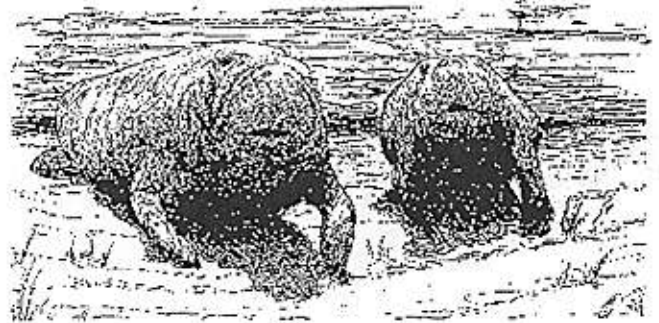
\* If a manatee protection plan is required from FP&L, how and when will this plan be developed, and will the public be given opportunities to review and comment?

\* If the warm water discharge were discontinued, how would this affect the manatees? Would this create a situation where manatees which have become

dependent on this warm water and have no prior experience traveling further south become imperiled?

The letter concludes; "The Caloosahatchee River Citizen's Association considers manatees to be an important indicator species regarding the health of the Caloosahatchee ecosystem. We are supportive of manatee protection and all other actions in the best long-term interest of the entire ecosystem. We hope you can address our concerns including details about your actions and timelines."

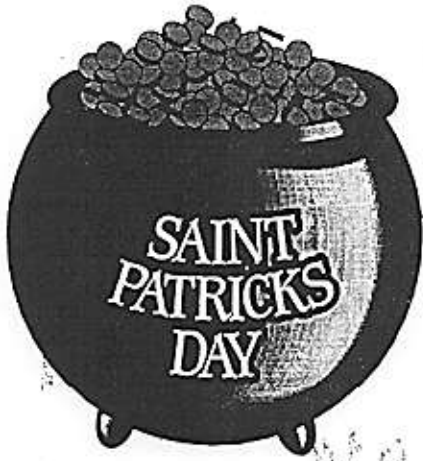
We invite all interested members of the Caloosahatchee River Citizen's Association to call or write us to express your opinion on this matter.



## Cruise the River

Saturday March 14th: Oxbow River Cruise  
10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Join Rae Ann Scholle, Charles Edgar Foster and Dr. John Capece for a four hour luncheon cruise through the historic oxbows of the Caloosahatchee. Explore the history of the river and learn about the critical ecology of the oxbows and the quality of the system which supplies our drinking water. For more information call 731-6602. Reservations & payment required by March 6th: \$25 per person (includes lunch).



**Happy Saint Patrick's Day!**

**Caloosahatchee River Citizen's Association**

**Officers:**

President:  
Vice President  
Secretary  
Treasurer

Rae Ann Scholle  
Steve Boutelle  
Jim Haggart  
Bill McGrath

**Directors:**

Rob Andrys  
John Cassani  
Peggy Hellenbach  
Keith Kibbey  
Mike McCartney  
Pam Porter, Jr.  
Walter Stephens

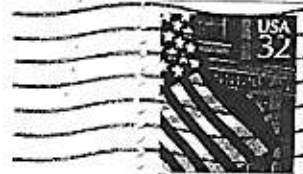
Susan Beckman  
Win Everham  
Erick Linblad  
Butch Jones  
Laura O'Brien  
T.C. Porter  
Laura Werwerka

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Community Forum  
Membership  
Projects and Events  
Public Affairs  
Speaker's Bureau

John Capece and Win Everham  
John Cassani  
Peggy Hellenbach  
Laura O'Brien and Pam Porter  
John Cassani and Jim Haggart  
T.C. Porter

Caloosahatchee River Citizen's Association  
P.O. Box 1165  
Fort Myers, Florida 33902



Jim Haggart  
12491 Coconut Creek Court  
Ft. Myers, FL 33908