



www.caloosahatchee.org

Fall 2005

Riverwatch@Caloosahatchee.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

- o **Telegraph Creek Paddle (date to be announced)**
- o **Pumpkin Fest (Alva) (Information will be posted on the web-site)**
- o **November 19: Fitness Fest (LaBelle)**
- o **November 20: Caloosahatchee River Ride**

Ninth Annual Caloosahatchee River Ride

Join members and friends of the Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association (RiverWatch) on their ninth annual bicycle ride along the Caloosahatchee River, Sunday, November 20, 2005. This event is part of a weekend of Fitness Fest activities. The ride begins at the Lee County's Caloosahatchee Regional Park, (18500 North River Road, main entrance, South side) on CR 78 just West of Alva, and follows the river to LaBelle, and back. If ridings not for you, we are looking for volunteers to assist with the event. We need people to work at the rest stops and registration, and some help transporting supplies to the rest stops.

Contact: If you are interested in helping with the event, please contact Ride Director Keith Kibbey at 239-278-7070 (daytime) or at riverride@caloosahatchee.org. Details and registration forms are on our web page.

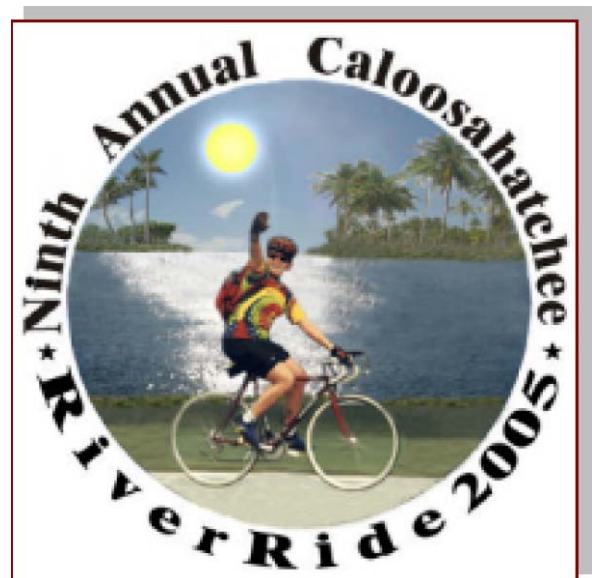
The Caloosahatchee River – Its importance to the Community, Region and Nation

Ecological Health: The River is naturally tannic, but due to increased agricultural activity, urban runoff, and nutrient-laden fresh water releases from Lake Okeechobee, the river's delicate balance of salt and fresh water has been jeopardized. Algae blooms and red tide threaten the river's habitat for manatees and the aquatic and marine life of its estuary at the Gulf of Mexico. **Use:** The River is a drinking supply for Lee County. It is part of the County Blue Ways recreational boating system and part of the Florida Intercoastal Waterway. The River provides irrigation to a great part of the Florida west coast citrus industry. It furnishes flood control for the eastern portion of the river, extending into Glades and Hendry County.

Values – Natural, Cultural, Historic and Economic: Historically, the Caloosahatchee was a highway for commerce prior to recent development of the area. Today, the River is a magnet, bringing our population up to 525, 000 people and a thousand more moving into the area every two weeks. Monetarily, the Caloosahatchee contributes 2 billion dollars a year to tourism through recreational use of the river and riverside cultural events in Lee, Glades and Hendry County. The River provides habitat for manatees, and a variety of aquatic and marine life found in both fresh and salt water.

The Fate of the Caloosahatchee in the next year will be determined by:

Design of C-43: The reservoir will have a practical water quality improvement functions to help reduce excess nutrients entering the estuary. The C-43 Reservoir is part of the Everglades Restoration Project, which began ten years ago. The construction of the reservoir has not begun; and the estimated completion is 2010. **Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule:** Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule is being reexamined for improvements. Urban water utilities and agricultural interests want this very large body to contain as much water as possible to cushion against any threat of drought. As a result the Lake's ecology is highly stressed from lack of flooded shoreline wetlands. Water quality is becoming worse, and excessive discharges to the River, when nature gives more water than the lake can contain. **Stormwater Utility Funding:** Local pollution agencies have developed a program of water quality remediation. Currently, funding is on a case-by-case basis, since the local governments generally do not have dedicated sources of funding. This year, the most populous of these, Lee County, will decide whether to dedicate a standing source of funding for stormwater quality improvements. **Improved Standards:** Best Management Practices for urban developments have failed to meet water quality improvement goals. New standards are being proposed and going through hearings sponsored by the development industry. There are also some startling exceptions to these standards. Passage of the standards and the degree of loopholes that will be allowed to continue, are decisions that will be made this year.

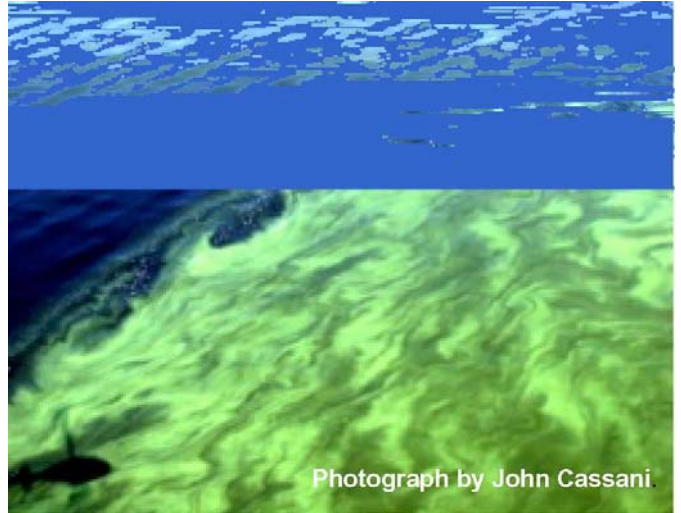


The Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association (CRC-“Riverwatch”) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of the River and it’s watersheds, through educ and promotion of the responsible use and enjoyments for all people.

CRCA Nominates Caloosahatchee as One of America's Most Endangered Rivers

Submitted by Marti Daltry

Since 1986 the nationwide American Rivers organization has released their report, America's Most Endangered Rivers, to highlight those rivers facing the most uncertain futures in the upcoming year. This report has an impressive history of combining the powers of national and grassroots partners to save rivers through improved public policy. In view of the ongoing deterioration of the Caloosahatchee River from algae blooms, polluted water discharges from Lake Okeechobee, and imbalances of salt and freshwater releases by the South Florida Water Management District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Riverwatch has decided to nominate the Caloosahatchee as one of America's most endangered rivers for 2006. We are compiling newspaper clippings, maps, pictures and other evidence of the extent of damage being done to the Caloosahatchee. We are also in the process of getting endorsements for this nomination from several environmental groups in Southwest Florida. The local Audubon chapter has agreed to endorse our nomination and other groups being tapped include the Sierra Club, the Southwest Florida Watershed Council, and Save Our Creeks organization. CRCA is looking for additional data, pictures, and testimonies of citizens who have experienced the River's decline firsthand. By heightening the awareness and the magnitude of the Caloosahatchee's problems, the CRCA hopes to communicate the urgency of the River's decline and spur increased proactive solutions resulting in the restoration of this vitally important waterway. By submitting this application, we fulfill our mission statement of continuing to maintain, protect and preserve the Caloosahatchee for future generations. The deadline for filing the application for nomination is October 1st so we need your input by Sept. 28th at the latest. Comments, can be emailed to us at riverwatch@caloosahatchee.org or mailed to CRCA, PO Box 2199, LaBelle, FL 33975



Photograph by John Cassani.

Telegraph Creek Paddle

To be announced shortly.

Information will be posted on the website.



Join us for an exploration of the wildest waterway in Lee County, Telegraph Creek, which runs from the Telegraph Swamp through Babcock

Ranch into the Caloosahatchee estuary. The four hour guided trip will explore the watershed of the Babcock Ranch. The waterway is a home to a diversity of wading birds, otters, alligators and swallowtail kites. The trip will depart from the WP Franklin Lock & Dam off State Road 80 in east Fort Myers. Two launch times are offered: early morning daybreak at 7 a.m and a midmorning 9 a.m departure. Each participant will be asked to sign a waiver before the trip begins. To preserve space call 239.275.3033 As soon as possible.

Fitness Fest (LaBelle) 'Get Up. Get Out. Get Active!'

November 19th

Information will be posted on the website.

Contact: Mary Ruth Prouty at

mary_prouty@doh.state.fl.us

Pumpkin Fest (Alva)

Information will be posted on the web-site

Join us for a day of fun, food, music and much more! All day events include: pony rides, classic car shows, a motorcycle show, children's games, exhibits, foods, refreshments and more.



Exciting contests; such as Pumpkin carving, pie baking and karaoke will be held throughout the day. Live music performed by Jake Murphy and Rough Stock will begin at 7 p.m Location: Off Highway 80, next to Alva Diner.

CALOOSAHATCHEE
RIVER
WATCH

Non-Profit
Permit No. 64
LaBelle, FL
33975

P.O. Box 2199, LaBelle, FL 33975

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