



For Immediate Release
April 21, 2006

Contact: Karen Bickford, "Adopt a Creek" Chair, (239) 246-4460
Mary Rawl, President, (239) 849-0964
Marti Daltry, Public Affairs, (239) 997-0673

Note to Media: Ms Bickford and others will be available on Saturday, April 22, 2006 at the Billy Creek Cleanup, Shady Oaks Park in Ft Myers, from 9am-12noon.

RIVERWATCH ANNOUNCES
BASINWIDE "ADOPT A CREEK" PROGRAM

FORT MYERS – In celebration of Earth Day and advance of National River Cleanup Week, the Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association (aka "RiverWatch") announces the basin-wide initiative to work with local groups to take ownership of their watersheds and "Adopt a Creek". Modeled after the highly-successful "Friends of Billy Creek" (FOB) partnership with the City of Fort Myers, the organization will work with neighborhood associations, community groups, or other willing organizations to take pride and ownership in their watersheds.

Activities such as creek cleanups, stormdrain marking, habitat restoration / planting and other activities can both enhance neighborhoods and improve water quality.

"We are seeking motivated groups to take on this task and we will train them and provide technical and funding assistance" according to Karen Bickford, newly appointed Chair of this program. "RiverWatch feels that it is important

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to set an example in the community to be part of the solution instead of just talking about the solution.”

“In addition, we can teach citizens to be proactive in the care of their watersheds on a daily basis.” said Mary Rawl, RiverWatch President. “We have a speakers’ bureau on a variety of topics ranging from the history of the River to “Florida Yards and Neighborhoods” (FYN) landscaping to technical issues such as TMDLs. Our focus in the coming year will be education and outreach.”

Public Affairs Director Marti Daltry will work with the groups to provide their own identity – t-shirts, displays, handouts. “There are already some highly successful programs locally such as the Cape Coral’s CanalWatch. We all need to do our part to clean up the Caloosahatchee. ”

The Caloosahatchee was recently named the #7 “Most Endangered River” for 2006 by American Rivers due to water quality concerns.

RiverWatch is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of the Caloosahatchee River and its watershed, through education and promotion of responsible use and enjoyment by all people. For more information, please see the RiverWatch website at crca.caloosahatchee.org

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