



For Immediate Release
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**BILLY CREEK CLEANUP
MAKES A BIG EARTH DAY IMPACT**

FORT MYERS - An army of men, women and children converged on Shady Oaks Park Saturday, April 22nd. Armed with rakes and carrying giant trash bags, these 70 volunteers plus approximately 20 City of Fort Myers park staff picked up 1 ton of trash along the banks of Billy Creek and around the park itself. From 9:00 AM until 12 Noon, the dedicated volunteers in their green Friends of Billy Creek t-shirts, combed the area, picking up beer bottles, plastic ware, old tires and assorted debris in an effort to make the park and the creek a more attractive and safer place to relax and enjoy.

Known as the hidden jewel of Fort Myers, Billy Creek has suffered from neglect for the past several years. This endangered waterway is being restored through its adoption by Friends of Billy Creek and the tireless efforts of Councilman Warren Wright, Ward 1. This Earth Day Cleanup is the second one for Billy Creek. Kudos and thanks go to the sponsors of this event: The Greenwald Group, Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program, the City of Fort Myers Public Works Department, Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ECT), and the Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association/Riverwatch. Many thanks to the volunteers who participated including employees from Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the City of Fort Myers Public Works Department.

"It is gratifying to see so many people come out and help the creek. We appreciate these men and women, who have taken time from their busy schedules to help our park and creek for Earth Day," said Marti Daltry, Public Affairs with C.R.C.A./Riverwatch.

Karen Bickford, Chair for the Adopt a Creek program under the auspices of CRCA/Riverwatch, was busy picking up debris as she paddled her kayak in the creek's murky waters. "We want to keep the people energized and mobilized and not feel helpless about their community," says Bickford. "People who get involved in their community stay committed to their community." Karen is encouraging local groups such as neighborhood associations and community groups to take ownership of their watersheds and "Adopt a Creek" while she provides the necessary technical and funding assistance.

Programs like "Adopt a Creek" are part of RiverWatch's mission to educate the public about the Caloosahatchee and its watershed. For more information about this non-profit organization, please see the RiverWatch website at crca.caloosahatchee.org.

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