

CALOOSAHATCHEE
RIVER
WATCH

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Dear John Capece,

Last year many of you who live along the beautiful Caloosahatchee River and throughout the watershed sent in donations to support the work of Riverwatch. We are asking for your support again this year. So please, include the Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association in your annual giving this season.

Our records show that your last donation or membership payment was in 2011 in the amount of \$40. We need you as a member and/or donor to support our 2013 efforts. Your donations are our primary resource to support CRCA programs. Dues payments made in late 2011 and 2012 are coming due again since Riverwatch is on a calendar year membership.

The Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association (aka Riverwatch) is dedicated to the protection of the River and its watershed, through education and promotion of the responsible use of the river for the enjoyment of all people.

The problems faced by the River and Estuary can be traced to changes people have made to the river and Lake Okeechobee over the past 100+ years. The straightening, deepening and widening of the Caloosahatchee River and the removal of the waterfall near LaBelle was done to protect the rural communities from flooding and to drain the inland areas of south Florida so it could be used for farming. But the changes permanently reshaped the Caloosahatchee and had unintended, negative consequences for our coastal estuary. As a result of these changes the river now sends to our estuary too much fresh water in the rainy season and not enough in the dry season. To make matters worse, all the freshwater flowing to the estuary carries excess nutrients and other pollutants.

Since 1995, Riverwatch has brought together citizens from all along the river to advocate remedies that can help solve some of the problems while preserving the economic benefits and flood protection.

Our Current Priorities on River Health:

1. Increasing the volume of water that can be stored in natural areas (preferred) or manmade reservoirs in the Caloosahatchee watershed;
2. Reducing and ultimately eliminate harmful, wet season discharges from Lake Okeechobee;
3. Promoting new ways to manage our communities, homes and farms to reduce the excess nutrients and other pollutants entering our river; and
4. Improving the current river banks and restoring some of the small river bends (oxbows) to promote habitat for fish and other wildlife.

The Caloosahatchee River is the lifeblood of our area; contributing to the two billion dollar tourism industry and underpinning our personal property values. It is a vital natural resource to our area, one that we must all work to protect and improve. Please act now by supporting Riverwatch through your donation.

Thank you.



Pete Quasius, President

Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association/Riverwatch