



Kabler Award Nomination: John Cassani

We nominate John Cassani for the Kabler Award for his vision and commitment in the founding and development of a regional Watershed Council for the protection, conservation and management of land and water in the Caloosahatchee and Big Cypress watersheds. Since its inception in 2001, John has been the guiding force behind the Southwest Florida Watershed Council which includes a broad cross section of members from throughout the community.

Through John's leadership, the Council was formed to share information regarding watershed management issues in the Caloosahatchee and Big Cypress Watersheds and provide a framework for coordination, cooperation and consensus among diverse, key stakeholders. He personally recruited stakeholders from distinct interest groups and brought them to the table, creating many new opportunities for the exchange of information and ideas and the establishment of partnerships and community building.

The mission of the SWFWC is to protect, conserve, manage and/or restore the land and water resources of the Caloosahatchee and Big Cypress Watersheds through participation and cooperation of all stakeholders in consensus building, planning, and decision making to meet the economic, natural and cultural needs for this and succeeding generations.

John was also the driving force behind the Council's [Estero Bay Nutrient Management Program](#) and the [Southwest Florida Aquatic Nuisance Species Surveillance and Education Network](#).

In 1996-1999 John contributed his limnological expertise by serving on the Board and technical committee of the Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association, CRCA Riverwatch to assess conditions and solutions for repeated algal blooms in the Caloosahatchee. In 1995-96 John was a founding member of a group that prepared a Lee County Land Conservation Ballot Initiative, called Conservation 2020, and has served on the panel that evaluates and approves land purchases. Since its inception the program has acquired over 22,387 acres including well over 30 miles of shoreline for conservation.

John served on the Board of the Florida Audubon Society from 1995-1999 and has been active in the local Audubon chapter serving as President, Conservation Chair and Newsletter Editor of the Audubon of Southwest Florida.

John's list of contributions to protect, conserve, educate, motivate and engage a broad cross section of west coast communities in restoration issues of the western and greater Everglades is unparalleled. It is our honor to nominate John Cassani.

Nominated by: Rae Ann Wessel, SCCF