



UPSTREAM DOWNSTREAM

Spring 2017

“Preserving the Nature Coast”

Annual Meeting

January 2017

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Dan Hilliard introduced two speakers from FWC, Fara Ilami, Coordinator of the Coastal Wildlife Conservation Initiative and Lily Swanbrow Becker, Adaption Coordinator. The presentations centered on the potential impact for Florida of a rising sea level on wildlife and their habitat. Serious challenges



Fara Ilami

must be met and overcome if many of our

Florida plants and animals are to have a chance to survive. Ms. Becker also reviewed present day problems limiting the impact of human contact with critical habitat like nesting areas. Thanks to both our speakers. Ms. Ilami can be reached at fara.ilami@myfwc.com



Lily Swanbrow Becker

Mark Fulkerson and Sky Notestein of SWFWMD were present and discussed the flow analysis computer model and the River Project Flow Determination Project that is ongoing.

River Study

Here it is well into 2017 and our River Study Project is on schedule and headed toward an October conclusion for the sample collection and analysis portion of the Study. We could not have made it this far without the tremendous support from all our partners. Thanks to the Towns of Inglis and Yankeetown, Florida DEP., Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), Florida FWC and the members of our organization who have made this possible. Special thanks to our boat captains for making the monthly trips possible.

Tall Trees and Nervous Horses

Dan Hilliard

I have a friend out in Arizona who lives at The Rusty Iron, just outside of Tombstone. A metal smith and general jack of all trades, he has lived a life best described as that of a modern day cowboy. He dresses in that style, talks the talk and is very much prone to getting to the point. As illustration, his comments on justice are almost always brief and succinct. “Short ropes and tall horses.” he says. He has a wry sense of humor to say the least.

Our Mission
To implement civic action and to promote the common good of residents of the community with a focus on public awareness and responsible stewardship of regional water sources, the basis for all the natural systems that define Florida's Nature Coast

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Tall Trees and Nervous Horses (continued from page 1)

Now humor is one of my most cherished gifts. With the strength of youth fading I find it the most effective path to making a point. I've had several points to make of late and have been in good company.

It seems to be what seniors do, this making of points. Having survived the adventures of adolescence and the drudgery of labor, we are in a position to do something not just for ourselves, but for children and grand children. They are our future.

So we have former Executive Directors of our water district railing about our current employees in the Florida Legislature who apparently have forgotten they are employed by us and paid by us. We have editorial opinion beseeching the legislature to stop acting like a dope, and I'm thinking about tall trees and nervous horses. The difference between Florida and southern Arizona is largely the lack of trees out there. Those that exist tend to be not so tall. But I digress.

Having a fair number of opinion pieces published here in the past as a functionary of a local 501.C3 corporation, I wish to make clear this is not one of those pieces. I speak from my heart and in my own fashion on topics that may be indirectly related but mostly not. I'm here to assist in the endeavor of informing you of my views, in hopes that you will know me better and what my interests and dreams are made of, for better or worse. You can label me an activist if you wish. I am not an environmentalist in the normal sense, but rather focused on the economics of the water resource and what it means to Citrus County specifically, and the state in general. I am not of liberal persuasion. In fact if my views on fiscal responsibility and foreign policy were on a billboard, I'm quite certain you would find Attila the Hun a rabid liberal in comparison. I come from the violent crucible that was war in younger years and followed with a highly technical profession that spanned nearly three decades. If you have ever flown a commercial jet into or out of Florida recent decades your life was in my hands.

Last November, we the People set forth an Amendment to the Florida Constitution regarding our waters and environment. In general terms the legislature has ignored us. With a great deal more specificity, the Florida House of Representatives has flipped us off. They have done so by trying to figure every angle there is to obfuscate the intent and pervert it into something more precious to their personal or party agenda. Reminds me of Gollum in *Lord of the Rings* in a way, hey? Apologies to Gollum, I know that was harsh.

To be clear, I'm not here to endorse a political candidate; quite the contrary actually. I'm here to say to you and the other 75% of voters that supported Amendment 1 that if you want to fire them I'm really OK with that idea. It is what business owners do to non-productive employees. It is what I do to businesses that fail to perform. They have failed to enact Amendment 1 in the fashion intended. They have in the past and as I write; schemed to further the destruction of our single most valuable resource, water.

Their actions are transparent. Such is the magnitude of their arrogance. I have no faith in politicians, but have an abundance of faith in you and the rest of Florida's citizens. They need to be reminded of who is boss.

Any suggestions as to where a fella could find some tall nervous horses?



Natural Shoreline Restoration at Winding River Park

Ursula Schwuttke

In 2015, the Felburn Foundation approved a grant application submitted by WAR to fund natural shoreline restoration at Winding River Park. The Foundation funded \$5000 for the permitting and design of this project. A permit waiver application and plans were completed by a Tampa design firm and approved by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. WAR is now waiting approval from the Corps of Engineers. An additional grant from the Florida Wildlife Commission was approved in late 2016 to fund the plant material needed to implement the restoration. Planting will take place in spring, as this is the time of year that offers the best chances of success for the plants. The funding is most likely to become available in mid 2017, for spring 2018 planting.

Withlacoochee Eel Grass

Ursula Schwuttke

Last July 20 WAR members and volunteers gathered to transplant bare root eelgrass (*Vallisneria*) from grass mats provided by the Duke Energy Mariculture Center. The group was instructed about how to plant the eel grass in small pots by Eric Latimer and his team from Duke Energy. Since that time, the pots have been submerged in a stationary rack built by WAR volunteers, and their roots have been given an opportunity to grow and strengthen. As of this time, the potted plants have matured and grown considerably and they look very healthy.

Eel grass planted off shore



Eel grass in it's new location

In November, a number of pots were transplanted to the river, just offshore from a house on West River road, about three quarters of a mile from US19. The plants need to remain wet at all times, including during very low tides, so the choice of location is important. At this time we report only modest success at the first location. The plants are alive, but have not yet started to spread much. Eric tells us this is a sign that the location probably isn't optimal. The next site will be chosen further up river, perhaps providing greater protection from possible variations in salinity and tidal fluctuation.

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About W.A.R., Inc

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Please visit our web site
www.warinonline.com

for current information on events as
well as articles of interest.

Withlacoochee Aquatic Restoration (W.A.R., Inc) is a 501(c)(3), not for profit charitable organization incorporated in 1984. Our underlying principal is promoting the social welfare and common good of the residents of our communities. Current focus is on coordinating with other public advocacy groups that share our interests in preserving and restoring the quality of the Withlacoochee River and associated ecosystems. Withlacoochee Area Residents, Inc. is engaged in improving state decision making oversight practices that continue to contribute to degradation and depletion of increasingly scarce potable groundwater that is the foundation for the survival of our communities.

W.A.R., Inc is responsible for the designation of the Withlacoochee River as an "Outstanding Florida Waterway", and contemplates future actions to provide an umbrella of Federal protection over the river basin and associated estuary.

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