



UPSTREAM DOWNSTREAM



Spring 2012

“Preserving the Nature Coast”

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SITUATION REPORT (SITREP) – Flow in the Lower River

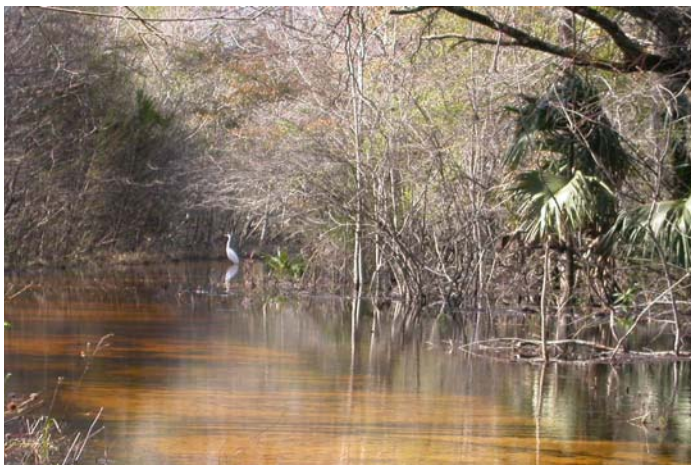
A majority of our W.A.R., Inc. membership has had only cursory exposure to the technical aspects of the science elements which largely drive W.A.R., Inc.’s overall strategy as we fight for the River. To be sure, final decisions regarding eventual restoration will be political and legal ones, but science has been at the core and will continue as a very large aspect of W.A.R., Inc.’s tactics in this fight. Directors have, with a couple of notable exceptions, had to largely educate themselves in a number of scientific fields to be able to speak the same language as those holding the reigns of power over our waters. This knowledge base has been acquired by a combination of osmotic immersion and the reading/study of appropriate resources. It is safe to say that even those among us with previous life experiences and/or degrees involving hydrology/geology have had to make sustained efforts to absorb new information sets that were salient to facts in issue at given times.

They Listen to Us

W.A.R., Inc. has, on multiple occasions, proven to bureaucrats from DEP, SWFWMD, and the Army Corps of Engineers that “knowledge is power” by presenting them with original thoughts based on their own science, or by detailing findings (from their own sources) that the regulators had previously overlooked. It has been our ability play on their own “home” turf that has generated the respect which they accord us. W.A.R., Inc. is, to hear them tell it, a group they will generally hear out.

A Proposal to Further Reduce Flow in the Lower River

In 2008, very shortly after W.A.R., Inc. efforts had essentially nullified further expansion of the Dixie Hollins Mine (between the Barge Canal and the Lower Withlacoochee River), we became aware of a plan being discussed under the auspices of WRWSA (Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority). This plan involved an \$800M program that would pull some 92.5MGD from the watershed. The 92.5MGD would be drawn from new well fields to the west and by direct withdrawals from Lake Rousseau.



The Lower River (from the Barge Canal to the Gulf) was already suffering from a lack of flow necessary to effectively scour sediments. A minimum of 1300CFS

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

SITUATION REPORT (SITREP) – Flow in the Lower River

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(cubic feet per second) is required, and only 1063CFS is available through the by-pass. The proposed 92.5 MGD withdrawal was a direct threat to even the 1063CFS. At the same time, Progress Energy was seeking approval to withdraw another 122MGD from the head of the Barge Canal. W.A.R., Inc. went back on the "war-path." If these two goals were to find complementary success, the already-suffering Lower River would be essentially dead and the Barge Canal would become a saline extension of the Gulf of Mexico.

W.A.R., Inc. Counter-proposal to Restore the Flow

W.A.R., Inc. generated a plan that called for cutting off and impounding the Barge Canal which would create a 1.5 billion gallon fresh water "lake". Because of a long-existing and well-documented leak beneath the dam, aided by several feeder springs that hadn't been previously identified, this freshwater "lake" could effectively replenish itself every four days. We documented our case, fortified it with their own numbers, created an information booklet with plan details, and invited Roy Mazur (head of the SWFWMD-directed group) and a couple of his engineers for a half-day tour beginning at the Rousseau Dam and terminating with lunch at the Yankeetown Woman's Club.

They came, they saw, they questioned, they ate, and they left scratching their heads. Methinks their heads may still itch. We have yet to see a final version of what they intend to do but an "idea" regarding the potential impoundment of the barge canal is a concept that seems to be floating around in any number of government offices at the moment.

And a Bonus

Another aspect of the W.A.R., Inc. plan would involve a reconnect across the proposed impound to the Lower River. This would serve to allow the 1300CFS required (and up to 2500CFS, if necessary) to flow down the Lower River in order to facilitate scouring, remove siltation and make it a healthier body of water. As well, a lock from the impound to the barge canal could facilitate boat traffic the full length of the body. By adding a couple feet to nominal water levels, the body would also serve to rebalance the natural water table which had been (and remains) negatively affected by deep water seepage into the Hollins Mine pit.



You Can Help

If this synopsis of the issue has a particular interest for you we would certainly appreciate the involvement of others willing to get their heads into a timely and important issue that affects the future of the entire community.

Dave Berkley

The Killing of the Lower Withlacoochee River

Throughout Florida, the Invasive Plant Bureau of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission conducts programs to eliminate "invasive plant species" from Florida waterways and lakes. This is done with a variety of herbicides, some of which are also classified as pesticides in some literature. These chemicals are approved by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency and awarded licenses and labels restricting their application. What could possibly be wrong with using these products? These are after all toxic chemicals designed to kill only specific aquatic vegetation.

Here is what could go wrong!

Evaluation of these herbicides is almost always carried out in bodies of fresh water with little or no flow, like farm ponds. Application levels are determined through these tests. Consider what happens when these herbi-

cides are applied in rivers or streams. In order to maintain a level of chemical concentration high enough to kill the target plants, the total amount of herbicide chemical added must be drastically increased.

Let's do an imaginary experiment...

Let's suppose ping pong balls will be the herbicide. The plants in an area ten feet by ten feet in front of your dock can be killed by exposing them to two ping pong balls for a 24 hour period. If your dock is in a pond 10 feet deep with almost no flow we simply drop two ping pong balls off the end of the dock and in 24 hours the job is done. But what if your dock is in a river where the water is flowing by the dock at a rate of 2 feet per second, (just under 1 1/2 mph)? We will need to add 2 ping pong balls to the river every 5 seconds to get the same

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The Killing of the Lower Withlacoochee River

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contact time (exposure) with the plants. Can you believe 34,560 ping pong balls will be needed? Unfortunately instead of ping pong balls we are dealing with one or more toxic chemicals.

Where do these chemicals go?

Obviously only a small portion of them will be reacted with the plants in the 10 foot square area in front of the dock. The rest will go down stream until it contacts and reacts with vegetation in the river or until is adsorbed onto inert materials and settles to the bottom of the river.

In the case of the Lower Withlacoochee River we observed that the feed of an herbicide called Sonar in Lake Rousseau survived the trip all way down the River at full concentration. For years the Bureau of Invasive Plant Management had maintained that these chemicals would break down and never reach the river, but no monitoring was done. Now we know the truth.

Damage done

It is our position that campaign after campaign of herbicide application in Lake Rousseau has resulted in the complete lack of aquatic vegetation on the bottom and wetted banks of The Lower Withlacoochee River. This is what our battle with the State is all about: excessive, unnecessary, costly herbicide treatment programs causing more harm than good. It is another example of bureaucracy out of control. Join us in this important fight!

What is in store for 2012?

The annual Fish and Wildlife-sponsored meeting to discuss the 2012 herbicide program for Lake Rousseau was held a couple of weeks ago at an RV park on the lake. Dan and I attended, both planning to speak against the program. The room was filled to capacity.

A fish-eye view of herbicides...

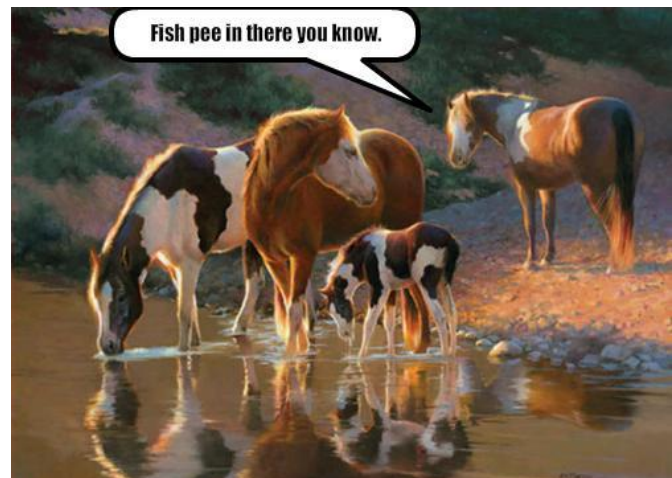
It appeared that the majority of the people were there to discuss the impact of the program on fishing. Without exception, the fishermen are opposed to the present program. Apparently both the size and quantity of the fish population has declined. They spoke of significant habitat loss and oblivious overkill of the plant life necessary for effective fish population management. These are fishing professionals and serious recreational fisherman.

Falling on deaf ears

I can remember only one person speaking in favor of a more aggressive program. There were so many people wanting to speak that neither Dan nor I had an opportunity to voice our objections. There was a lot of head nodding and excuses by Mr. Sullivan, who manages the Lake Rousseau program for the Invasive Species Group, but no indication of any interest in eliminating or reducing the program. After all folks, this is just another example of an out-of-control State program spending your tax dollars and ignoring serious objections.

Now the good news.

The State budget has reduced the amount of money available for the program state-wide. That means that the purchase of herbicide for the Lake Rousseau program may be reduced around 30%.



We need your help!

I hope the members of W.A.R., Inc. will discuss this damaging program with their representatives in the State Legislature, write letters to the local newspapers, and talk the subject up with your fishing buddies.

John Fuchs

Withlacoochee River Minimum Flows and Levels

By Dan Hilliard

A little over 3 years ago, initial technical review of the Withlacoochee River "Minimum Flows and Levels" (MFL) was initiated by staff at the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD or the "District"). This is a process required by Florida Statute 373. FS 373 requires that most lakes and rivers in the state be evaluated to determine how much water could be withdrawn before causing "significant harm".

What is "Harm"

The Florida Legislature did not define "significant harm" in the statute, leaving this to the water districts. SWFWMD has historically taken the position that 15% destruction of habitat is a reasonable benchmark. So far, they have used that standard on all MFL determinations within their jurisdiction and are attempting to continue using it in the Springs Coast and Withlacoochee River MFL determinations. Their chosen standard is a one-size-fits-all policy position rather than a scientific finding. This policy ignores the unique attributes of each river system. The statute requires peer review by independent scientific panels and in each peer review analysis I've read, the panels have said in various ways that the 15% MFL threshold is arbitrary.

The Process

I knew very little about the MFL process or the implications of the determinations that District staff would recommend to the SWFWMD Governing Board. During my first meeting with MFL staff in Brooksville I was briefed on the general nature of the process. You should know that the staff is remarkably professional, courteous, and helpful. They are also bound, not only by statute, but by Chapter 40-D8 Florida Administrative Code. In other words, they have limits placed on them by law. They also have direction that flows south from Tallahassee, which is not necessarily in the best interests of our River. In any case, during this first conference I took an opportunity to express that W.A.R., Inc. would resist significant additional reductions of flow to the Lower River because they would compound the damage already done by the construction of the Cross Florida Barge Canal.

It Adds up to a lot of trouble

Proposed water withdrawals in the Withlacoochee watershed by the Withlacoochee Water Supply Authority will reduce flows to the Lower River by up to 13.8% of average system flows (annually). Adding that to Progress Energy's proposed consumption of water from the canal during system low flow scenarios, we can expect as

much as 30% reduction of fresh water supply to the coastal estuary. These fresh water reductions result in increases in salinity due to tidal flow. Since salinity is of critical importance to estuaries, a significant loss of habitat will be the inevitable result.

I'd like very much to assure you that the District and FDEP will regulate themselves by all statutes, codes, and the state's Constitution, thus diligently protecting our river. Unfortunately that is not the case. District staff as a whole does not concern itself with these pesky documents despite very clear language that they should. **To Learn More**

To better understand the MFL process and its implications for the Withlacoochee, during the summer of 2011 we participated in a series of meetings with stakeholders in the MFL process for the Citrus County coast. We interacted with many interest groups, politicians, and Federal and state officials. At the end of this process, some stakeholders presented their views to District staff, or in our case, directly to the District Executive Director. If you would like to familiarize yourself with the MFL process you can view many of the documents and power points at the SWFWMD web site at www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/projects/mfl/springs-coast-mfl.php.

If you wish to review the WAR input to this process and better understand the broader process at play, it is available on our website. Click on the blue link near the top of the W.A.R., Inc. "Articles" page at www.warinonline.com/articles.php.



No Response from SWFWMD

Many of the concerns expressed by stakeholders were answered by SWFWMD in writing in expeditious fashion and these responses are either posted on the web site or summarized in various documents posted there. Apparently our submittal has caused some consternation

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Fun and Fundraising 2012



2011 Successes!

A big **Thank You** to Lee and Betsy Paulet for organizing the hugely successful **Florida Folk Music concert series** of 2011. A heartfelt "Thank You" to the musicians who gave freely of their time and musical talent! And, "Thank you" to everyone who made donations to support W.A.R., Inc.'s initiatives. Your financial contributions are needed and appreciated! The **2011 Kayak Challenge** was another big success! Attendance last year was over twice the number of entrants than the first year's effort.

2012 Plans

The **2012 Kayak Challenge** will be on March 24th. See the



event flyer included in this newsletter! Each year has been more successful. We expect this year to be even greater.

2012 Concert Series: We do not at this time have the schedule for the continuation of the concert series but **STAYE"TUNED"** and expect it to be announced fairly soon. **You don't want to miss this!!!**

Withlacoochee River Minimum Flows and Levels

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for it has yet to be answered three months after it was submitted. Our document argues the scientific and economic consequences of flow reduction. It also argues the legal issues, and I suspect this is the reason District staff has been slow to respond. These are thorny issues, some of which have not, so far as I know, been pre-

sented in the past.

W.A.R., Inc. is responsible for the Lower River's designation as an Outstanding Florida Water. It is not quite as outstanding as it once was, however, and I'll be quite pleased to see Hades freeze before I quietly accept further degradation of this magnificent river.

Captains Cove Outfitters
James Zaloga

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Hook-Line & Sinkers
BAIT & TACKLE
"Your One Stop Bait Shop"

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352-447-5477
Across from the Chamber of Commerce

4th Annual Withlacoochee Wilderness Challenge

Host: **Withlacoochee Area Residents, Inc**

501(C)(3) not for profit organization

Who: **Open to the Public**

What: **Kayak and Canoe Challenge**

The Challenge is a **4 mile River Rally**, with no class or gender groups. The rally requires participants to find clues and answer questions as they paddle down river. The individual with the most correct answers will be the winner.

Where: **Winding River Park, Yankeetown**

From US 19, 2.5 miles west on Hwy 40
left on 56th St to Park

When: **March 24th, 10:00 a.m.**

Pre-Registration \$25 Day of Event \$30

Forms and Payment Information on our website www.warinonline.com

Questions contact **Jack Schofield 352-447-6152** or **Jenny McCarthy 352-447-2199**
email: warinc.directors@gmail.com

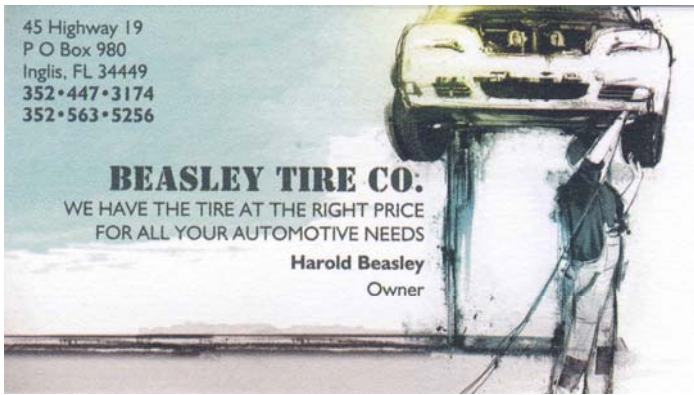
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Withlacoochee Area Residents, Inc.

Preserving The Nature Coast
a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization

Membership Application

NEW MEMBER RENEWAL

Please Print

Name _____

Business _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ FAX _____ E-MAIL _____

YOUR PRIVACY WILL BE PROTECTED, ADDRESSES ARE NEVER SOLD

Indicate Membership Level

- Individual \$20
- Family \$25
- Merchant/Group \$100
- Life \$1000

Additional Contributions

Welcome!
\$ _____

How Can You Help?

- Special Events
- Fundraising
- Publicity
- Research
- Area of Expertise: _____

Please Make Checks Payable to: Withlacoochee Area Residents, Inc. or W.A.R., Inc.

MailTo: PO Box 350
Inglis, FL 34449-0350

W.A.R., Inc.
P.O. Box 350
Inglis, FL 34449

Officers

Pres. Steve Edmonds
Treas. Jenny McCarthy
Sec. Janie Hinson

Directors:

Dave Berkley
Jack McCarthy
Rodney Walters
Gary Moss
Dan Hilliard

Contact Us

warinc.directors@gmail.com

Please visit our web site

www.warinonline.com

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

Withlacoochee Area Residents Inc.,
a 501 (c) (3) Corporation

About the Withlacoochee Area Residents

Withlacoochee Area Residents, 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. Withlacoochee Area Residents, 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.

Withlacoochee Area Residents, Inc.

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