



Upstream Downstream

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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

Seasons Greetings and a Happy New Year! And what a year it has been pushing the issue of reconnecting and restoring the flow of the Lower Withlacoochee to pre-barge-canal conditions.

We've had many meetings and discussions with Florida State Legislators, Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), our state representatives Clemmons and Masullo, and State Senators Perry and Ingoglia. In addition, we have had meetings and continuing conversations with Congresswoman Kat Cammack and communication with Colonel James Booth of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).



The WAR Board of Directors met with Florida Congressman Chuck Clemmons (left) and Florida Senator Keith Perry (right) during the Levy BOCC meeting in Bronson on September 12. WAR Director Dan Hilliard is addressing the council.

A status update meeting with the Town of Inglis Commission and Town of Yankeetown Council brought them up to date on our progress, with the purpose of expressing to them our request that they actively communicate with state legislators, requesting action to rectify this environmental injustice.



At the request of the officials of the two towns, the W.A.R board created a letter for our local elected officials to use as a template for communicating with our state representatives as we seek their assistance in restoring and reconnecting the Lower Withlacoochee River. ***It is critical for our local elected officials to communicate with our state legislators and our state of Florida government agencies.*** Our local officials have been supplied with contact information and we hope and expect that they take this opportunity to use their positions of power to get the action we need for the Lower Withlacoochee.

Previously we had advised you of an in-person meeting with the USACE, and as of this newsletter the meeting has not happened. However, we are told it will happen. It seems that Hurricane Idalia, the US House of Representatives issues of which we all are aware, and the Federal House Budget conundrum make it difficult to schedule a time when Congresswoman Cammack is not engaged in crisis management.

That is not stopping the WAR Board of Directors as we have scheduled meetings in December with FDEP Committee Staff for Environmental Resources. We will be present at the upcoming SWFWMD Board of Governors meetings. We will continue to bring awareness to the degradation of our Lower River and sorry state of impounded Lake Rousseau.

The Board requests all members and concerned citizens to get involved in seeking restoration of the Lower Withlacoochee River. We have actively been pursuing our elected officials and state agencies, but we need your support and communication to these same representatives and agencies to

get action. ***Silence will accomplish nothing! We have provided contact info so you can email, send letters or call our elected officials. A template letter is included in this newsletter.*** Without you taking on the cause to restore the Lower Withlacoochee River we will face another 100+ years of waiting.

Jack H Schofield II, President



A local shrimp boat heads out to sea from its home port in the Lower Withlacoochee River. Without our River, we have nothing.

The Message is Clear and the Solution Well Documented

There is yet another study and report that we have uncovered, documenting the causes and recommended remediation of the degradation of our river: The Lake Rousseau Management Policy and Restoration Plan. This study from 1989 points to the same deterioration of the Lower Withlacoochee River and Lake Rousseau as more recent studies. Subsequent investigations completed by URS/SWFWMD in 2004 and

W.A.R Wetland Solutions 2021 study all report the same issues. We have placed each of these studies Executive Summary's on the W.A.R web site WWW.WAR-INC.ORG for your review.

The question must be asked: *Why have the state agencies who studied Lake Rousseau and our Withlacoochee River and then documented degradation related insufficient flow failed to act on the findings of their own studies?* Let's review the comments from these studies and those of the W.A.R Wetland Solutions findings. The following comments have been taken verbatim from these documents.

The 1989 Southwest Florida Water Management Districts Lake Rousseau Operations and Management study.

1. Primary objective of this study Is the development of an operation and management plan for Lake Rousseau that would improve the environmental qualities and recreational potential of the reservoir.
2. Ecologically, Lake Rousseau is rapidly progressing toward a more marsh-like system.
3. The Lake is characterized by excessive aquatic plant growth, accumulated bottom sediments and poor water circulation.
4. Extreme draw-downs would improve Lake Rousseau.
5. Substantial modifications of the existing USACE water control structures would be necessary to maintain flows to the lower river.
6. Modifications to the bypass facility and barge canal (lower river re-connects) were investigated. For reservoir management, the

barge canal option is preferred because it would allow constant flushing of the western end of Lake Rousseau. This option would be the least expensive and would restore the original configuration of the lower river channel.

7. Funding of modifications to existing structural facilities on Lake Rousseau will require Congressional approval.

8. Therefore, if it is determined that a drawdown is in the best public interest, it is recommended that the USACE, as part of the development of comprehensive management plan for lands and water within the Conservation Area which is to be created upon deauthorization of CFBC, investigate the preliminary engineering feasibility of structural modifications to facilitate a drawdown including placing a weir across the barge canal and re-connecting the two sections of the Withlacoochee River Channel.

2004 URS/ Southwest Florida Water Management Western Terminus Cross-Florida Greenway Assessment.

1. Purpose. The portion of the Withlacoochee River downstream of the Inglis Dam has undergone significant alteration since the turn of the 20th century.
2. The construction of the Cross Florida Barge Canal in the 1960's created additional impacts to the segment downstream of the canal.
3. The lower segment of the river, downstream of the Rock Dam, receives flows only from the By-Pass Channel via a spillway at its western terminus. The maximum flow rate from the bypass system is estimated to be 1540cfs, considerably less

than maximum normal flow rates and flood flow rates for the river system.

4. The changes described above have altered the historic flow regime of the Withlacoochee downstream of Inglis Dam, creating environmental impacts.

5. Restoration alternatives. Listed in the report are four alternatives that were provided to the district's scope of work for this study. Each alternative was evaluated with respect to their impact on flooding, natural systems, water quality and navigation.

6. It is important to note that the proposed alternatives do not impact on water levels in Lake Rousseau.



*Rivers are the veins of the Earth - don't let ours die.
Photo courtesy of Ken Rohling.*

2021 W.A.R Wetland Solutions Lower River Study

1. Key among preliminary conclusions was that the Lower Withlacoochee has been significantly altered by human activities over the past 100+ years.

2. Since Construction of the Cross Florida Barge Canal in the late 1960's the Lower Withlacoochee has been deprived of peak flows in excess of 1450cfs.

3. Historic herbicide treatments in Lake Rousseau may be partially or wholly responsible for the near eradication of aquatic plants that formerly grew in the Lower Withlacoochee River.

4. A direct and achievable alternative for environmental enhancement of the Lower Withlacoochee River is restoration of historic peak flows from Lake Rousseau to the lower river.

5. This could be accomplished in one of two ways: Either increasing the flow capacity of the Inglis Bypass Channel and control gate to between 2500 and 4500cfs, or by reconnecting the Dam to the historic channel of the lower river by installing a new lock in the Cross Florida Barge Canal.

6. Further reducing water quality problems in the Lower Withlacoochee will require efforts to eliminate both direct and indirect sources of nitrogen to surface and ground waters.

7. Periodic draw-downs of water levels in the lake should be considered in conjunction with limited mechanical harvesting as an alternative approach for lake management.

8. A variety of alternatives exist to provide structural improvements and environmental enhancement on the Lower Withlacoochee River. Bypass channel modifications or re-connection of the Lower Withlacoochee.

9. Other projects: Repair existing leaks around Inglis Dam.

We encourage you to read the executive summaries which are available on our web site as they explain more fully the degradation of our Withlacoochee River and provide comments and solutions for restoration.

The Towns Won't Flood

In the course of W.A.R., Inc. (WAR) outreach on the topic of restoration of the Lower River there has been concern expressed that restoration of flow volume sufficient to scour detrimental sediments from the river would lead to flood damage in the communities of Yankeetown and Inglis. These concerns are ill considered and flooding will not occur.

The simple view is found in the history of the communities prior to the construction of the Barge Canal. There is nothing in historical records to suggest this occurred due to high flow volume. There have been a number of flood events in days gone by, but they have been caused by tropical storm surge, not high flow volumes.

To illustrate the point, recognize that historical flow volumes of the Inglis Dam and Bypass Spillway are, on occasion, quite robust. The design maximum flow for the spillway is 1450 cubic feet per second (CFS). It attains that flow volume occasionally, most times when the lake is being lowered by the Water District in preparation for mitigation of high rain events. The dam discharges much greater volumes, sometimes at or somewhat more than 6,000 cfs. The combined flow from those structures can reach as high as 7,500 CFS.

The objective of the WAR. restoration is to increase flow to the lower river an additional 2,500-4,500 CFS in order to enhance flow velocity sufficiently to scour sediments and assist in restoration of the river. Current sediment accumulation is quite high and it inhibits the growth of native aquatic vegetation such as eel grass.

If the preceding explanation is not clear to you, let us examine this from a more scientific perspective. What governs water height (stage) in the river? Well, an obvious influence is tide level. Another influence is flow volume. Regardless of tide, discharge from the spillway increases stage slightly. Since the water stage is higher at the spillway than river mouth it does what water always does, flow downhill.

The puzzle we ponder related to flood potential goes directly to stage and gravity. Given normal tide cycles, higher stage will result in higher velocity downstream. You should know that the increase of velocity is not linear with stage increase, but rather an increase that is geometric in nature.

Keep in mind that a cross sectional measure of any place in the river is a variable entity. It is influenced by tide stage, upstream discharge volume and its influence on total stage. Note that when the river rises it typically encompasses a higher gradient along the river banks which slope upward away from the river channel. In other words, double the flow volume and you will not see twice the increase in stage. Also, as stage increases, so does flow velocity.

So, how do we juggle the flows to accomplish this? Well, there are many ways to achieve this objective, but the simplest explanation would be the installation of a flow control structure in the Barge Canal downstream of the old river channel, one that would allow directing flow to the canal and at the same time, to the lower river via a similar structure in place of the rock dam. Both structures would be managed by the water district, just as the dam and spillway are at present.

Sample Letter for You to Customize and Send

Below is a sample letter for you to send to our Florida State Representative and Federal Representatives. Please take a moment to do so. It will only cost you a stamp!

Honorable [example: Keith Perry,]

The citizens of [insert name or town] request your attention and action to correct the problems created on the Lower Withlacoochee River when the failed Cross Florida Barge Canal was abandoned. In the 55 years since the Lower Withlacoochee River was cut off from historical maximum flows by 75%, the health of the Lower Withlacoochee River has deteriorated, and it continues to do so today.

The citizens and residents of this area depend on this designated Outstanding Florida Waterway for much of our livelihood. Having a healthy river provides jobs and economic opportunity as well as recreational opportunities. In its current condition we are not maximizing the value this water body can provide for the local communities, for the county, and for the State of Florida. In addition, reduced flow impacts the river channel, making it smaller over time and less able to handle flood waters that result from storm surge in named storms.

We are requesting that as our representative you work to commit the State of Florida and the Federal Government to correct the problems, by correcting the situation at the Inglis Dam and Inglis Bypass Spillway to allow peak historical flows to be returned to the Lower River. The Withlacoochee is a designated Outstanding Water Way and deserves to be maintained as such. "Water is Life" and without the needed repairs and restoration, the river system will fail and our communities will be destroyed by salt water intrusion and increased flood risk.

Respectfully

Suggestions for Customization

You can utilize the sample above and modify the first sentence: I (or We) request your attention...". Better yet, describe your very own experience witnessing the degradation of our River. When you were a kid, was this river clear, were there abundant game fish, turtles, dolphins, manatee, otters, eel grass and other signs of a healthy ecosystem? And what do you see today? Cause your voice to be heard!

Send us a copy too. We'll consider it for inclusion in the next Newsletter. warinc.directors@gmail.com

State and Federal Elected Officials Address

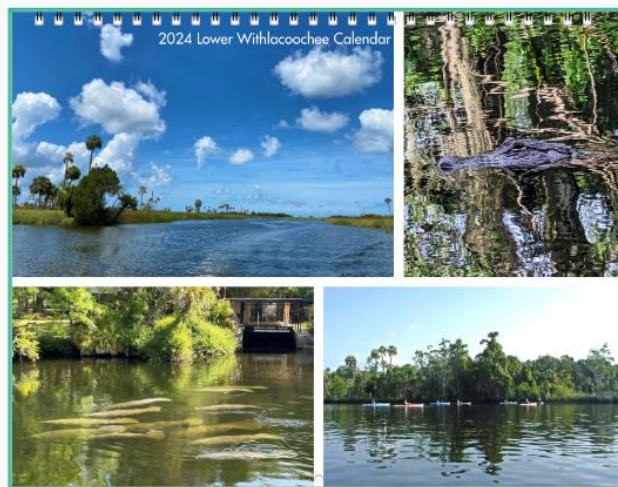
Contact	Title	Address					
Kat Cammack	Congresswoman District 3	2421 Rayburn House Office Building Washington D.C 20515					
Jeannie Rickman (Aide)	Economic Development Coordinator & Constituent Advocate	3301 SW 34TH Circle Suite 402 Ocala FL 34475					
Ruth Clark (Aide)	Director of Operations						
Gus Bilirakis	Congressman	2306 Rayburn House Office Building Washington D.C 20515					
Karen Mayer (Aide)	Director of Strategic Operations						
David Halbstein	District Aide						
Keith Perry	State Senator Represents Levy Co	405 Senate Building 404 South Monroe St Tallahassee FL 32399-1100					
Anthony Serge							
Damon Vitale	Legislative Aide						
Suzanne McGuire	Legislative Aide						
Gigi Hernandez	Legislative Aide						
Blaise Ingolia	State Senator Represents Citrus County	310 Senate Building 404 South Monroe St Tallahassee FL 32399-1100					
Hannah Christian	Legislative Aide						
Jordyn Ivie	Legislative Aide						
Chuck Clemmons	State Representative Levy County	422 The Capitol 402 South Monroe St Tallahassee FL 32399-1300					
Mike Murtha	Legislative Aide						
Robin Steele	District Aide						
Dr. Ralph Massullo	State Representative Citrus County	308 House Office Building 402 South Monroe Tallassee FL 32399-1300					
Adelle Hembree	Legislative Aide						
Dawn Faherty	District Aide						
Col James Booth	USACE	701 San Marco Blvd Jacksonville FL 32207					
Edward C Smith	Florida DEP Eco System Restoration	3900 Commonwealth Blvd Tallahassee FL 32399-3000					
Kevin O'donnell	Florida DEP Eco Restoration						
Chuck Hatcher	State Parks Director						
Robert Yero	District 3 Bureau Chief						
Jennifer Roberts	District 3 Asst Bureau Chief						
Mickey Thomason	Park Manager IV						

Jennette Seachrist	SWFWMD District Director of Resource Management Division	7601 US HWY 301 Tampa Fl 33637-6759				
Mark Fulkerson	Chief Professional Engineer					
Cara Martin	District's Government and Community Affairs Office Chief					
Desiree Mills	Levy BOCC District 3	310 School St Bronson Fl 32621				
Jeff Kinard	Citrus BOCC Distric 4					
Steve Schwing	Mayor Inglis	PO Drawer 429 Inglis Fl 34449				
Eric Erkel	Mayor Yankeetown	2511 Harmony Lane Yankeetown Fl 34498				
Elected Officials Highlighted in Yellow						
Key Elected Officials Staff Aide in green						

Calendars for Christmas !

We still have a few 2024 fine-art photo calendars featuring photos of Lower Withlacoochee scenery and wildlife. All photos are by local photographers and chosen for their aesthetics and their appropriateness for each of the given months. We thank all who submitted photos. This is a beautiful calendar, size 11x14, printed on high-quality paper in high resolution. All photos are suitable for framing if desired at the end of the year.

You can order from our website, www.war-inc.org. **Several local businesses also have these beautiful calendars for sale including Brooks Dockside Seafood, Inglis Drugs, and Firefly Vintage.** Alternatively, you can order by check - please send your check with the words "2024 Calendar" in the memo and mail to WAR P.O. 350 Inglis, FL 34449. Be sure to include your contact information. The price is \$30 per calendar. All calendar profits will go to river projects. Get one for yourself - and order several more as gifts. **Think Christmas gifts!** The calendar cover is shown below.



Vacant Position

W.A.R. currently has a vacant board position we are eager to fill. If you desire to help us restore our river, please contact Jack Schofield 352-586-2255 during normal business hours.

Turn your Lights Off

Artificial lights can have a significant impact on the behavior and migration patterns of various animals, including birds, bats, sea turtles, and insects. According to FWC, even one artificial light source can disrupt normal flight activity, long-distance migrations, or even attract insects that don't normally move from their habitat. When these bugs stay on the light for too long, they tend to die from overheating.

To reduce the impact of artificial lights on wildlife, FWC recommends the following steps:

1. **Use low-intensity lighting:** Reducing the amount of light that spills into wildlife habitat can help reduce the impact of light pollution on animals.
2. **Use wavelengths that do not affect wildlife or attract insects:** Yellow light is less likely to affect wildlife or attract insects than blue or white light.
3. **Keep lights away from wildlife habitat, especially endangered:** Placing lights away from wildlife habitats can help reduce the impact of light pollution on animals.
4. **Be eco-conscious:** Use energy-efficient bulbs and fixtures to reduce the amount of energy used by artificial lights.
5. **Get educated:** Learn more about the impact of artificial light on wildlife and how you can help reduce it.
6. **Raise awareness by sharing knowledge:** Share your knowledge with others to help raise awareness about the impact of artificial light on wildlife.

By taking these steps, you can help reduce the impact of artificial light on wildlife and protect the environment.

Annual Member Meeting

Our annual Member Meeting is 5:30pm Tuesday, January 23, 2023 at the Yankeetown Women's Club. Please come support W.A.R. and our community effort to restore our precious River.

Local Fishermen



Catching some bait near Yankeetown. Photo courtesy of Ken Rohling.



A gorgeous evening for fishing. Photo courtesy of Ken Rohling.

Withlacoochee Aquatic Restoration (W.A.R., Inc.)
Preserving Our Nature Coast

Membership Application New Member Renewal

Please Print

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE _____ **ZIP CODE** _____

TELEPHONE _____ **CELL** _____

E-MAIL _____

YOUR PRIVACY WILL BE PROTECTED, ADDRESSES ARE NEVER SOLD

Indicate Membership Level

Individual \$30

Family \$40

Life \$1,200

How Can You Help?

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Publicity

Events

Area of Expertise _____

Additional Contribution

\$ _____

Make Checks Payable to: W.A.R., Inc.

Mail To: PO Box 350

Inglis, FL 34449-0350

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

Officers:
President - Jack Schofield
Vice President - Vacant Position
Treasurer - Phillip Sprinkle
Secretary - Laurie Jagers

Directors:
Ursula Schwuttke
Dan Hilliard
Dave Huffman
John Westers

Contact Us
warinc.directors@gmail.com
or visit us online: www.warinc.org

Withlacochee Aquatic Restoration (W.A.R., Inc.) is a 501(c) (3), nonprofit charitable organization. Incorporated in 1984, our underlying principle is promoting the social welfare and common good of the residents of our communities. To that end, W.A.R., Inc. coordinates with government and non-government agencies and groups to preserve and restore the quality of the Withlacochee River and associated ecosystems.

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

Withlacochee Aquatic Restoration, Inc. is committed to improving state decision making and 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.