



# UPSTREAM DOWNSTREAM

“Preserving the Nature Coast”

Fall 2021

## CHANGING TIMES

In a cosmic sense it wasn't too long ago that only a few people dwelled in what we call Florida these days. It was a primitive land with abundant wildlife and natural resources and the local folks meshed well with that world.

Times have changed in many ways of course, but one of the most daunting impacts has been the mushrooming population of humanity. In 1950 the U.S. population was approximately 152 million and there were but about 2.8 million living in Florida. Today the numbers are 333.4 million and 21.6 million respectively. The US population has slightly more than doubled while Florida's increase is just short of eightfold.

The impact on our home has been profound and insofar as the environment, not at all good. There is no point in delving into numbers of gallons pumped from our aquifer daily or tons of fertilizer and other pollutants introduced as it is perfectly clear, unlike our springs, something needs to change. It gives rise to the question of what we can do to cure what ails us. In 2012 the WAR organization recognized that the segment of the Withlacoochee River west of

*(see CHANGES pg 2)*



## Lower Withlacoochee River Report Acknowledgements

Funding for this environmental assessment of the Lower Withlacoochee River was through grants and donations, which W.A.R., Inc. acknowledges as follows:

- Phase 1 was funded by the Felburn Foundation
- Phase 2 was funded by the towns of Inglis and Yankeetown and by members of W.A.R., Inc.
- The Phase 2 supplemental monitoring was funded by Duke Energy, Drummond Bank, and members of W.A.R., Inc.
- Phase 3 was funded by members of W.A.R., Inc.

Our partners during Phase 2 helped make this study possible. The Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) provided shared staff resources for sampling and flow measurements. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) provided analytical chemistry and biological sampling support. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) provided fish population data and information on aquatic weed control activities.

The contributions of our partners and the funds provided through grants and donations are greatly appreciated.

### INSIDE

Changing Times	1
Are You Ready For Next Year	2
Lower River Reports Acknowledgements	1
About Us	4

### 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*



photo by Gary Kuhl

### CHANGES

Lake Rousseau had, to large degree, departed from the realm of functional waters and in no way resembled the designation of Outstanding Florida Waters, a designation bequeathed in the late 1980's by the state in response to a petition submitted by our organization. A multiyear study ensued, the result of which clearly illustrated the causes of this decline and made recommendations for remedy.

The report is available via our website, [www.warinonline.com](http://www.warinonline.com) and is presented in two fashions. The first is comprised of individual documents for each of the three phases of the study and the last a compilation of all three into a single document. If one takes the time to examine the report it will be obvious that our waters are a mess for multiple reasons. The most obvious discrepancy is the river suffers greatly from the reduction of flows that resulted from construction of the Cross Florida Barge Canal. A read of the data summary will also reveal that we have won the Chemical Cocktail Award! Our waters are a mess.

(see *CHANGES* pg 3)

### ARE YOU READY FOR NEXT YEAR?

This year for the first time, WAR is offering a calendar featuring 12 photos from our lower river as a fundraiser. It's a 12x12 inch calendar, printed on high quality, heavy weight paper, with high quality printing. We're really happy with how this calendar turned out, and we think you'll like it as well. It's much nicer than a standard fundraiser calendar in terms of size, quality and photography, and it will make an excellent holiday gift.

Six of the twelve monthly photos were submitted by members, and the remaining six are by our renowned local photographers, Andy Fisher and Ken Rohling. Additional member photos appear on the front and back covers. Photo credit is given to all photographers. The photos are of very nice quality, suitable for framing (after the end of each month!) if desired. We thank the photographers who submitted photos - we had a great response, from many members, and all the photos submitted were taken on our river.

In addition to the photographers mentioned above, we feature the following photos

#### Front Cover

Chas Anderson and Christine McKim

#### April

Dan Oates

#### June

Dick Vautrinot

#### July

Eric Weber

#### October

Catherine Whittaker

#### November

Helen Ciallella

#### Back Cover

Christine McKim, Chas Anderson  
Phil Sprinkle, Rodney Walters,  
Kent Gardner, and Jack Schofield

You can view the calendar here,

<https://www.mixbook.com/.../2022-withlacoochee-river...>

**But - do not purchase from MIXBOOK or you'll pay more, and your payment won't benefit WAR.**

We hope you'll purchase several calendars! Support WAR and enjoy the artistic work of our local photographers every day next year. Order between now and October 31, and receive your calendars by mid/late November.

Any questions? Please ask

## CHANGES

Lessons learned? As recognized some years ago, messing with Mother Nature is more often than not an ill considered idea. Examples: Turning the Kissimmee River into a canal, then realizing it needed to be turned back into a river to help mitigate nutrient loads into Lake Okeechobee and the coastal regions of South Florida because the recurring Guacamole Festivals were not something to be enjoyed. Likewise, allowing the introduction of many thousands of invasive life forms into our state has implications beyond the pale. Notably, invasive aquatic vegetation introduction has consequences. Too much weed and you can't operate your boat easily in state waters. A typical response by the state has been the introduction of aquatic herbicides in an endless parade to manage rather than eradicate such things. See the Phase 2 Report which is a data summary and you will be introduced to the plethora of such chemicals flowing down our river.

Having been a long time resident of Florida I recall when virtually all of the state waters were clean and productive. Those that have moved here in the last few years or even decades will not have such memories in later years because the state of our waters has been on a downhill ride for the last 30 years or more. So, without the memory horizon to rely on how does one recognize the mess we are in? Look at the data, read the reports and then tell me if you are of the opinion that a half dozen

pharmaceuticals and a multitude of herbicides mixed into our waters make you want to just jump in and go swimming

Solutions? It is simple and complex at the same time. First thing that comes to mind is we have to stop doing those things which have led to the current state of affairs. Examples are numerous. Ditch the septic systems in favor of waste water treatment, eg; sewers and waste water treatment. Quit spraying the lakes and rivers with herbicides when there are alternatives, such as a draw-down on reservoirs. Quit dumping millions of tons of fertilizer on lawns and crop fields when there are better methodologies available.

You may recall that some years ago the City of Crystal River began sending treated wastewater to Progress Energy for cooling/cleaning emissions from their nuclear/coal powered generators. It was treated to reclaimed water standards which removes active biological agents and reduces some chemical pollutants. This action sharply reduced the need for the power company to pump millions of gallons per day from the aquifer, thus enhancing aquifer levels and increasing spring flow in the Kings Bay spring system. It was a win/win which remains in place following the transition to Duke Energy oversight.

We are at a crossroads here in Florida. We can make the right turn or let future generations live in a wasteland. The choice is ours to make.



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## ABOUT US

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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for current information on  
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