



EVERGLADE KITE

THE AUDUBON SOCIETY
OF THE EVERGLADES
(serving Palm Beach County, Florida)

~ ~ ~ *Special Edition! February 2004* ~ ~ ~



Conservation Update



by Cissie Durando

By the summer, we all knew the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) would not gracefully accept two court decisions and put money and energy towards cleaning up their admitted conveyance of dirty water from land discharge and development accommodation to waters destined to end up in the Everglades. The argument was essentially "Water is connected to water is connected to the water" and it was all essentially one Big Body of the same water body. This, despite the fact the water had to be pumped because it was going "uphill."

The Miccosukee Indian Tribe and some environmental organizations (including the ASE) signed on to continue to dispute the SFWMD's reasoning, claiming it was a violation of the Federal Clean Water Act and that a National Pollutant Discharge Permit was required.

We should recall how SFWMD bitterly fought acknowledging the original lawsuit of polluting Everglades National Park and the National Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge. We should also recall how a new governor, Lawton Chiles, promised one of his first acts, if elected, would be to stop shameful spending of taxpayer's money to fight the proven accusation. "Guilty as Charged!" we should also recall that Marjory Stoneman Douglas took her name off of the original bill because to wait until 2006 was an abomination. Chiles is in his grave, as is Marjory, and the current politics have delayed clean-up another 10 years (they tried for 20)!

Interestingly many states have seen fit to join in and choose sides prior to the Supreme Court hearing on January 14th. Some feared it would set a precedent if we won and they would have to get permits to discharge into "jurisdictional" or "navigable" waters. Many states supported the environmental organizations, among them: New York state. I presume they feel protective of the great Hudson River.

I am told a prediction of outcome is impossible. We will probably have to wait months. Incomprehensibly the SFWMD chose to have at least 10 of staff and the whole board fly to Washington and cared for at taxpayer's expense. There is a claim the board paid for themselves. One staff of SFWMD proudly announced at a recap on January 15th at the regular board meeting that "We did not concede anything."

Anyone interested in more detailed environmental updates, do call me at 561-965-2420 If you would like to attend a formal Conservation Committee meeting, let me know. There is so much going on in this big county that will have forever impacts, we NEED members to shape up and get involved in Jupiter, Palm Beach Gardens, Singer Island, and Ocean Ridge. No shortage of crisis, but definitely time -- and specially mine! I, and the ASE need YOUR help as these critical matters continue to swamp our county and state. If you just marginally keep up with the Scripp/State/County proposal, commit to comment to your county commissioner, or chair Marcus, or send letters to the editors.