

Corps of Engineers  
South Florida Operations Office

# Bigwater



## Inside this issue:

Park Rangers and Volunteers Involved in Student Education	2
Clewiston Butterfly Garden Expanded	3
2008 Water Safety Program	4
Billboards & Banners Used to Convey Water Safety Messages	5
Life Jacket Loaner Program	6
Corps Engineering Feat—The Alaska Highway	6
Staff Updates	7

Volume II, Issue I

January 14, 2008

## 1350 Cypress Trees Planted Lakeside at Moore Haven



Land was disced and marked with flagging in preparation for planting



An auger was used to dig holes for plantings



A contractor finishes-up one of many labor intensive plantings

This past fall the environmental stewardship section coordinated a large scale planting project of native cypress trees along the rim canal in Moore Haven. Biologist, Jon Morton headed the project and formulated the layout of eight dome-shaped plots that mimic the growth characteristics of natural cypress stands. Thirteen hundred and fifty 15-25 gallon-sized cypress were planted in  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre plots spanning a distance of 2.6 acres. The site was previously occupied by exotic melaleuca trees which were removed in a joint effort by the Corps of Engineers and South Florida Water Management District in 2001.



Examples of an auger and disc plow, respectively



## Park Ranger Bailey Tells Fish Stories to Students of Florida Gulf State University

On the morning of October 25th, Greg Tolley and his ichthyology class from Florida Gulf Coast University seined the waters around the W.P Franklin Lock and Dam to survey the types of fish that reside in this section of the Caloosahatchee River. During the visit Park Ranger Richard Bailey took the opportunity to share his knowledge of local fish and wildlife with the class.

Ichthyology is the branch of zoology that studies fishes

A seine (pronounced sane) is a large fishnet that hangs vertically, with floats at the top and weights at the bottom

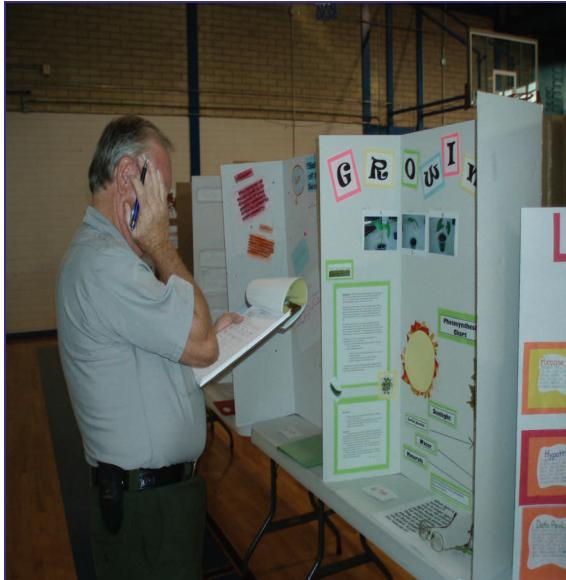
Instructor Tolley and his students have been collecting fish data in the area for the past five year, and have generously offered to provide the W.P. Franklin Visitor Center with copies of past surveys.

Information from the surveys will be used in future interpretive programming. See page 3 to view the different species collected during the most recent survey.



Students gathered at the viewing platform to listen to Ranger Bailey

## WP Franklin Ranger and volunteers participate as judges in the Alva Middle School Science Fair



Park Ranger, Rich Bailey thinking hard on his critique

On December 6<sup>th</sup>, Park Ranger, Rich Bailey and volunteers, Cathy Hutson and Kathy Bush participated as judges in the annual Alva Middle School Science Fair. They served on the same judging team critiquing 44 science exhibits from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade biological section. They determined the best three entrees and also declared seven honorable mention exhibits. In past years, some of the top exhibits have advanced to regional and state finals. Seventh and eighth graders also entered biological and physical science exhibits to be judged. The best 16 exhibits were selected and top three identified. The top three exhibits will proceed to regional science fairs and possibly the state to compete for higher honors.

## Bigger Garden = Bigger Benefits

Recently the butterfly garden in Clewiston was expanded by approximately 2500 square feet nearly doubling its size. The garden consists exclusively of native wildflowers, shrubs and trees. Some of the newest additions include the wildflowers, tropical sage, blanket flower, dune sunflower and sunshine mimosa; the shrubs, beauty berry, Florida privet, wild coffee, and privet cassia; and the trees, wild lime, pop ash, and blackbead.



For the purpose of providing butterflies with a balanced food supply plants should be selected that provide food for winged adults and caterpillars. Adult butterflies use their straw-like tongues to siphon nectar from flowers whereas caterpillars rely on their sharp jaws to eat plant leaves. Beside butterflies, many other animals benefit from native plantings such as honey bees, moths, flies and bumble bees. Many mammals and birds also make full use of butterfly gardens, eating insects, seeds and fruits and use plants for nesting and hibernation sites.

Perhaps the greatest advantage of planting native plant gardens in an area such as south Florida is the benefit of water conservation. Native plants require far less water than turf lawns and exotic plants, which consume half of Florida's drinking water via irrigation. Before humans invented irrigation, native plants survived both droughts and floods. Once established in the landscape, native plants can survive on available rainfall. Regular watering can be minimized, and in many cases, eliminated entirely. Other attributes of native plants is that they are less costly than turf grass to maintain in that they require no mowing or fertilizing. ([floridagardener.com](http://floridagardener.com) and [fnps.com](http://fnps.com))

## Fish Survey Results from W.P. Franklin Lock & Dam

Continued from page 2

### Species Collected in September 2007 Survey:

Chain Pickerel	Tidewater Silverside	Brook Silverside	Bluefin Killifish
Rainwater killifish	Eastern Mosquitofish	Sailfin Molly	Sheepshead Minnow
Flatfish	Opossum Pipefish	Warmouth	Bluegill
Largemouth Bass	Mayan Cichlid	African jewelfish	Clown Goby
Hogchoker			

## Water Safety for 2008

### Water Safety Education

For another upcoming season, the Recreation and Lands Management Section will bring its K-5 Water Safety Program to various public and private schools in Lee, Hendry, Glades, Palm Beach, Martin and Okeechobee counties. Home school groups in these counties will also be encouraged to participate.



Park Rangers and Water Safety Volunteers are responsible for coordinating and administering the safety program and are essential to its success. This year's goal is to reach 6,000 more children above last year's total. From December 2006 through April 2007 the Water Safety Volunteer Program produced an estimated cost savings of \$23,808 to the Government..

2007 water safety volunteer staff—most will return for 2008.

Throughout the year, Park Rangers and Volunteers conduct water safety programs at W.P. Franklin and St. Lucie Recreation Areas, and provide visitors with water safety education materials.

Lock and Dam personnel across the Okeechobee Waterway (OWW) and at Canaveral Lock contribute to the water safety effort by distributing water safety promotional items to boaters and other visitors. Lock and Dam staff at W.P. Franklin also assist park rangers in monitoring the swimming beach for safety.

The Corps of Engineers distribute water safety promotional materials in cooperation with the American Red Cross, Swim Lee County, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Palm Beach County Drowning Prevention Coalition.

### Community Events

Park rangers and volunteers regularly attend community events such as La Belle's Earth Day, Clewiston's Sugar Festival and Okeechobee's Speckled Perch Festival to promote water safety. They answer questions and provide tips for staying safe around water. At these events children often like to share stories of what they've learned at school from the Corps' Water Safety Program, which is testament to the effectiveness of in-school programs.

## Water Safety Message Billboards

Water safety billboards are located at the W.P. Franklin Campground and the Moore Haven Lock and Dam. They can be seen by boat traffic entering and exiting the lock chambers and also viewed by



visitors in the recreation areas. Two additional billboards are currently being constructed at Ortona and St. Lucie Lock & Dam. The billboards are 10' x 20' and are designed to be lowered during inclement weather to avoid damages to the signs and structures. They also can be easily removed and interchanged among locations.

## Water Safety Message Banners



Banners with various water safety messages were procured and placed across the project in October 2007. They are located at W.P. Franklin Recreation Area swim beach, St. Lucie Recreation Area boat ramp, in the five lock chambers across the OWW and in the lock chamber at Canaveral Lock. They vary in size from 2' x 5' to 3.5' x 5', are made of vinyl, and have grommets on their edges for installation.

Banner located at W.P. Franklin swim beach. One side is printed in English and the other in Spanish.

Lock Operator, Ben Baggs stands aside water safety banner at Canaveral Lock.



## Life Jacket Loaner Program

The life jacket loaner program has been a success with jackets being used extensively at Corps boat ramps and at the W.P. Franklin beach with a 95% life jacket return ratio. This year the Lee County Marine Law Enforcement Task Force is participating in the program and has donated 48 life jackets.



Life Jacket Tree of Life at St. Lucie



Park Ranger, Richard Bailey checking the loaner station at the W.P. Franklin boat



Reports Control Clerk, Sandra Pelham models one of life jackets donated by the Lee County Marine Law Enforcement Task Force

## Past Engineering Feats

### The Alaska Highway

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1942, American War Department Officials became worried about the vulnerability of Alaska, since at that time there was no road link to the lower 48 states. US Army bases in Alaska had to be supplied by sea, but the supply shipping was now in range of Japanese aircraft carriers. The solution was the Alaska Highway. This 1523 mile stretch of road was built in an astonishing eight months and twelve days by the US Army Corps of Engineers. The highway connects the Continental U.S. to Alaska through Canada. It crosses rivers, swamps and mountains as it winds its way through some of the wildest terrain in North America. (some information referenced from Wikipedia.com)



Alaska Highway Construction April 1942



Corps of Engineers Truck Driver



South Florida Operations Office  
525 Ridgelawn Road  
Clewiston, FL 33440

Phone: 863-983-8101  
Fax: 863-983-8579

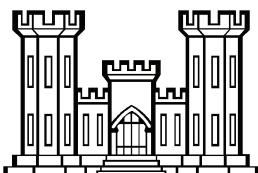


Thank you to Rich Bailey and other Recreation and Land Management staff, Hope White, Jeremy Crossland, Rob Schnell and Jon Morton for their contributions to this edition of the BigWater newsletter.

## Help Wanted

If you would like to contribute ideas, information or photographs to BigWater email or call the newsletter editor, Michael Boles.

michael.e.boles@usace.army.mil  
863-983-8101 x222



Corps of Engineers

## Staff Update

Congratulations to Rob Schnell on his selection as the Assistant Chief of the South Florida Operations Office!



Quality Assurance Section Chief, Edwin Cuebas has returned to serve as Acting Chief of SFOO until January 15. Donnie Kinard, Chief of the Multi Project Section will take over the reign on the 22nd and remain in the position until its permanently filled. Great to have you back guys!

## A Warm Welcome To The Following New Employees:

Mark Claudio – Lock & Dam Operator

Michael Hinz – Engineering Equipment Operator

Norman Lynn – Engineering Equipment Operator

Gregory Carpenter – Park Ranger, WP Franklin Visitor Center

Connie Cunningham – Reports Control Clerk



Welcome to the Team!

**Good luck in your new jobs!**

## Recent Employee Position Changes

Stephen Schneider, from Crane Operator to Planner Estimator

Joe Warn, from Tow Boat Operator to Supervisor Facility Manager Specialist

Michael Mannhardt, from Lock & Dam Operator (St. Lucie Lock) to Lock & Dam Equipment Mechanic

## SFOO Employee Heads to Iraq

Crane Operator, Dan Finke will deploy to Iraq on January 13 for 400 days as part of Mobilization Iraqi Freedom. All the staff at SFOO wishes him a safe journey.

<http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/sfoo/BigWater/BigWaterNewsArchives.htm>