



Letters To The Editor

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Guest opinion: Destroy those waters and you destroy us

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By SAM BAILEY, Board Member,

PURRE Water Coalition

As a concerned Florida citizen nearing 90 years of age, I have always been very conscious of the environment and the history of Lee County, as well as the sorry history of what man has done to disturb the beautiful system nature devised for the waters in our state.

Here in Southwest Florida, we are nothing and will have nothing without our precious water at the high quality we and our visitors have come to expect through the years.

I am just devastated by the lack of interest the government is taking in the Lake Okeechobee problem. It's just crazy to neglect a situation that can be solved.

Lake Okeechobee has too much fresh water, and the Everglades is crying for fresh water. If the lake water flows south through the "River of Grass," it will purify itself. That does not happen when it's released from the lake via man-made locks according to a man-made schedule down the Caloosahatchee, which once meandered with cleansing twists and turns of grasses but was long ago straightened to nothing more than a canal. The more lake water that comes down the Caloosahatchee, the more destruction is visited upon our river, our bays and estuaries. Destroy those waters and you destroy us. It's just ridiculous.

Can someone please explain to me why the government has seen fit to put water that's wanted and needed in the Everglades in a place it's not needed and not wanted (here); where in fact it is destructive?

Rebuilding the Herbert Hoover Dike to make it safe for the people who live there is the highest priority. I was around in the 1920s when so many people lost their lives as Lake Okeechobee overflowed its banks. Yet here it is, more than 82 years later, and the federal government is still fiddling around with that dike. The dike is still dangerous; the problem has not been solved.

There is a plan that would go a long way toward solving all of these problems, but the government's apparent lack of interest is causing it to dwindle away to almost nothing; that is the state's purchase of the maximum possible acreage from the U.S. Sugar Corp., including all the option lands available over the next few years. That land would eventually allow water to flow south through the Everglades, eliminate the dam problem, the polluted fresh water destroying estuaries on the west and east coasts, and keep the proper and natural amount of water flowing where it belongs to balance salinity levels as nature intended.

As it stands now, we're robbing Peter to pay Paul, especially when the water can be used somewhere else. As an old, hard-working, conscientious American and Floridian, I feel very strongly about this.

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