

**Coordination of Environmental Restoration Efforts
Big Cypress Watersheds Restoration Coordination Team
Annual Report 2008 - 2009**

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The Big Cypress Watersheds (BCW) began its ninth year of operation on January 1, 2009 thanks to renewed support from the Big Cypress Basin of the South Florida Water Management District. Big Cypress Watersheds has made a concerted effort to encourage participation from all respective agencies and stakeholders within the Big Cypress and Estero area. Considerable local participation continued during the past year holding meetings locally at Edison State College, the Conservancy of Southwest and the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge and offices.

Goals & Accomplishments:

- ◆ **Mission:** To foster coordinated efforts among agencies and interested parties with respect to identifying, monitoring and restoring environmental conditions in the Big Cypress watersheds and downstream estuaries.
- ◆ **Goal 1:** To provide a forum for exchange of information relevant to the Big Cypress watersheds and downstream estuaries.
 - ▶ Attached to this report are the minutes from these meetings. At each meeting we discuss hydrologic conditions throughout the watersheds and any significant changes or occurrences from the last meeting. We discuss breaking news and update the group on how our agencies and the issues we work with are seen by the public eye. This forum of discussion provides an exchange for advice and insight. Each member agency updates the group on their latest research and projects. The meetings have been a great opportunity for research presentations from guest agencies and an excellent opportunity to foster collaboration among participants. This past year we started a research photo exchange which allowed participants to showcase some of their research without the anxiety of preparing a full presentation. It has been a successful way to exchange information and find out what research is going on with other agencies and organizations.
 - ▶ We met on the following dates this past year:
 - November 21 2008, Edison State College, Naples
 - February 20, 2009, Conservancy of Southwest Florida, Naples
 - May 1, 2009, Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge main office, Naples
 - September 18, 2009, Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, Immokalee

- ◆ **Goal 2:** To provide enhanced communication and dissemination of information relevant to monitoring current environmental conditions and timely generating information concerning the health of the Big Cypress watersheds and downstream estuaries.
 - ▶ The BCW is connected via email and weekly reports of the watershed and breaking news posted on the website and the “*South Florida Watershed Journal*” <http://sfwj.blogspot.com/>. Email reminders about new postings are sent out to its members and Southwest Florida RRCT members. Hydrologic condition updates are provided on a weekly basis to Big Cypress RCT and Southwest Florida RRCT
- ◆ **Goal 3.** To provide enhanced communication and dissemination of information with respect to conservation and restoration of ecosystems of the Big Cypress watersheds and downstream ecosystems.
 - ▶ In collaboration with the Instructional Technology and Broadcasting Services department at Florida Gulf Coast University, the BCW developed a webpage where hydrologic data will be posted on a weekly basis as well other team information. The website address is www.fgcu.edu/bcw. Robert Sobczak took further initiative and expanded on this web interface with the “*South Florida Watershed Journal*” <http://sfwj.blogspot.com/> updated weekly in a blog format. This information network provides connectivity between meetings and fosters awareness of issues concerning the greater watershed areas of South Florida.

Final Summary

The Big Cypress Watersheds has continued successfully to provide a forum of exchange of information and networking among member agencies. We continue to encourage membership and participation at the quarterly meetings and look forward to another successful year in 2009-2010.

Agenda 2009-2010

- November 20, 2009 Meeting
- February 2010 Meeting
- May 2010 Meeting
- September 2010 Meeting

Attachments

- Meeting Minutes for November, February, May and September meetings