



LOXAHATCHEE RIVER PRESERVATION INITIATIVE



Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners



FLORIDA State Parks
...the Real Florida



Jupiter Inlet District



sewind.gov



Participating Agencies



We are teaching future generations to care for our environment.



Manatees, a threatened species, find food and shelter in the estuarine waters of the Loxahatchee River.



Mangroves and oysters are an important estuarine habitat for juvenile fish. They also protect our shorelines from erosion. LRPI has funded community based oyster reef restoration projects under privately owned docks.



Threats to the River

The Loxahatchee River is located in the northeastern part of Palm Beach County and southern Martin County. Its Northwest Fork is Florida's first National Wild and Scenic River. While beautiful, the river faces many threats including urban development and diminishing water resources. The watershed has been reduced in size due to drainage for flood control and diversion of water for consumptive uses. Wetlands were drained for agricultural and urban development as well. Pollution from non-point sources, such as septic systems, has negatively affected water quality in the river due to increased nutrient levels. Increased salinity due to a lack of freshwater flows into the river has resulted in significant losses of cypress swamp and an increase in mangroves farther upstream.

Loxahatchee River Preservation Initiative

The Loxahatchee River Preservation Initiative (LRPI) is a multiagency partnership formed in 2000 to develop funding opportunities for projects that would improve, protect, or restore the natural resources within the Loxahatchee River watershed. Since 2003, LRPI has funded over \$34 million in water and environmental enhancement projects. Problem areas have been identified and categorized by area and type. LRPI focuses on prioritizing "turn-dirt" projects by providing matching funds for those projects. Examples of problems addressed are: stormwater runoff, invasive species, siltation, water quality, habitat fragmentation, and elimination of septic systems.



Looking to the Future

Several key projects that are critical to the long-term preservation of the Loxahatchee River watershed still remain to be implemented. A poor economy and other regional priorities have resulted in less state and local funding available for LRPI. While the Loxahatchee River and our community have benefited from completed projects, there is still more work to be done. Renewed funding and support is necessary to continue to provide environmental benefits to residents, river users, wildlife, and the river. Restoration and preservation are long-term commitments made to ensure the quality of our river for future generations.



Water Quality Monitoring

Water quality data is collected from 42 representative sites spread throughout the watershed. These scientific results allow resource managers to gauge the effectiveness of implemented projects and the need for additional projects. Reports are available at www.loxahatcheeriver.org



Invasive Plant Removal

Non-native invasive plants out compete native plants posing a major threat to local habitats. Without the native plants, wildlife may be unable to find food or shelter. Invasive plants such as melaleuca are controlled using chemical treatment, and mechanical or hand removal. Control of these plants improves diversity and aids in fire prevention.



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Cypress Creek Restoration

Cypress Creek supplies nearly 1/3 of the water to the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River. Restoration efforts include filling old drainage ditches to increase water storage in wetland areas and protect the river from stormwater surges. Berms were removed to restore wetlands and reestablish natural freshwater flows to Cypress Creek.



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Represented here are a select number of critical projects out of the 69 projects completed by LRPI partners. For more information visit: www.lrpi.us

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Erosion Control and Improved Water Management

New, remote operated weirs, such as the one pictured, help to control water levels in drainage canals located in Jupiter Farms. These weirs have also improved fish habitat, decreased aquatic weeds, and helped to lessen erosion along canal banks.



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Loxahatchee Slough Restoration

Historically, the slough (sloo) carried water north to the river but was overdrained by the C-18 Canal. Removal of non-native vegetation such as Australian pines, backfilling ditches, and leveling of spoil areas created by canal construction restored wetland elevations and water flows.



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Environmental Education

The River Center, located in Burt Reynolds Park, is an interactive educational opportunity for children and adults. Large aquariums trace the habitats of the Loxahatchee River from the cypress swamps to the coral reefs. Visitors can meet our local sea life in the touch tank.



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Jones Creek Restoration

This tributary to the Loxahatchee River is surrounded by urban development, which has degraded the water quality. Several phases of this project have led to stormwater improvements, removal of sediments caused by runoff, restoration of the normal water flows and addition of a public access area to the hammock and floodplains.



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