



BFA

BREAM FISHERMEN ASSOCIATION

1203 N 16th Avenue
Pensacola, Florida 32503

A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION CHARTERED IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA

January/February 2014 Newsletter

Happy New Year!

Please mark your calendar for the next General Membership Meeting, Wed, 5 February 2014. This is an Eatin' Meeting! Doors open at 5:30 PM. Dinner will be served at 6:00 PM. Dinner will consist of a fish fry, baked beans, coleslaw and hushpuppies. Cost \$8.00/person.
1615 East LaRua Street, Pensacola.

Presentation – Please join us in welcoming Rick O'Conner, Escambia County Sea Grant Extension Agent, who will explain the Bringing Back the Bayou's (B3) Program and welcoming your involvement. Learn more about how the BFA has been supporting this effort through education and outreach.

Issues We are Keeping an Eye On: by Barbara Albrecht, BFA President

- Sometime this year, FL is expected to hit 20 million residents, which will pass New York State's population.
- Many of our beloved rivers are drying up – due to nearby groundwater removal. How can this be happening? State water managers have failed to set minimum flows and levels for these river systems, something that the state legislature instructed them to do 40 years ago in 1972. People should be worried.
- Population of FL in 1970 was 6.7 million...hindsight is always 20/20.
- Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) Phase III proposed projects will discussed at Pensacola Bay Center - the old civic center – on Tues evening 6:00 – 9:00PM, 28 Jan 2014.

Dandruff Shampoo Could Mess Up Waterways

Toxicity testing on shampoo that fights flakes reveals that it is bad for plants and animals once it is in wastewater. Every time you wash your hair, a lot of shampoo goes down the drain. And if you're bothered by tiny white flakes, odds are you use a shampoo that deals with dandruff.

Such medicinal shampoos often include a fungicide. A fair amount of fungicide thus ends up at the local wastewater treatment plant. Those industrial facilities remove a lot of stinky stuff. But they mostly fail to grab the drugs in soaps, shampoos, toothpastes, perfumes, sunscreen and other skincare products that our daily habits add to wastewater.

Now a study has detected fungicides from anti-dandruff shampoos in the water. And even at concentrations as low as 0.5 micrograms per liter of H₂O such fungicides can hurt many organisms, from tiny algae to big plants and fish. The study is in the journal *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry*.



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Exposure to the fungicide is chronic: It gets repeated day after day after day. The algae just die. But bigger plants suffer retarded growth. And animals like fish are affected, too, since they share similar cellular mechanisms with their distant relatives. We might want to start coming up with ways to get our dandruff shampoo—and other personal care products—out of the drink. —David Biello

Florida regulators keep water dirt cheap, treat it like dirt

By Ron Cunningham, Columnist, *Ron Cunningham is former editorial page editor of The Sun.*

It's hard to say which notion is more absurd on its face.

That Gainesville Regional Utilities — which built a biomass plant and led the nation in solar power incentives to help confront climate change — may challenge a year's-delayed state effort to set minimum flows and levels (MFLs) for the Santa Fe and Ichetucknee rivers, lest MFLs might one day restrict GRU's ability to pump as much water as the utility desires.

Or that somebody at GRU seriously believes that the state Department of Environmental Accommodation or the St. Johns and Suwannee rivers water withdrawal districts might actually restrict anybody's ability to pump as much water as they desire.

Because if history is any judge, the mission of Florida's environmental regulators and water managers is to keep the pumps on full flow 24/7 so that nobody — not farmers, not utilities and certainly not green lawn enthusiasts — will have cause to complain to their elected officials about “job killing” environmental regulations.

No, their job is to keep water dirt cheap; which, of course, is why we treat water like dirt in Florida.

The Sun's excellent multi-day series about the slow death of Florida's unique natural springs boils down to two inconvenient truths: Over-pumping is drawing down the Floridian Aquifer and killing the springs, and the water that does continue to boil out is increasingly laden with algae-promoting nutrients from agricultural, septic tank and urban stormwater runoff.

And it's not just the water beneath our feet that is showing the inevitable consequences of our collective decision to treat it like dirt.

In Tallahassee, politicians have ostensibly been scratching their heads over the “mystery” of mass dolphin deaths in the Indian River Lagoon. So on Wednesday, John H. Trefry, professor of marine and environmental sciences at the Florida Institute of Technology, tried to solve the mystery for them. He gave members of the Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation plastic bags full of the toxic muck that is killing thousands of acres of sea grasses — the lagoon's life support system — along with a word of caution.



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“Please don't open the bag ...,” Trefry warned the senators. “We will all be leaving the room very quickly. The smell of hydrogen sulfide will be quite strong.”

Oh yeah, and remember that minor incident involving the Deepwater Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico a few years ago (a.k.a. the worst oil spill in U.S. history)? Well, neither do the polls in Washington, D.C., apparently. Part of the “historic bipartisan” budget agreement hammered out this past month would reportedly open up for oil and gas drilling even deeper and harder to get at areas of the Gulf.

Because, after all, what could possibly go wrong?

We have to stop treating water like dirt, people. Cheap water is polluted water. And polluted water exacts a terrible price that the polluter may not have to pay but the rest of us most certainly do.

Seriously, Florida, it's time to take the clean water pledge.

Late last year, a coalition of some 40 environmental groups launched The Floridians' Clean Water Declaration Campaign. The coalition's rather modest goal is to get at least 100,000 Floridians to sign on. But, really, it needs to be millions if anyone expects the effort to get the attention of the politicians in Tallahassee and D.C.

Ultimately the objective of the campaign is nothing less than the creation of a grassroots-level water ethic in Florida. A collective resolve to stop treating our water like dirt.

The declaration asserts that “The people of Florida have an inalienable right to:

1. Clean drinking water whether that water is drawn from public sources or private wells.
2. Safe lakes, streams, springs, rivers, canals and coastal waters for swimming and fishing.
3. Protection from water pollution and its effects.
4. Know the sources of pollution that threaten Florida's waters.
5. Protection from water privatization and its effects.
6. Abundant water for drinking, fishing and recreation.”

Just words, really, with no force of law behind them.

But who knows? If enough of us take the pledge, and then insist that our elected officials take those steps necessary to preserve “clean water for future generations,” we might just have the beginnings of a clean water revolution in a state that can no longer afford to treat its water resources like dirt.

And wouldn't that be a remarkable change?



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Special THANKS go out to Richard Olsen, Tom Lett, and Barry Van Matre
The BFA Water Quality Monitoring Team!

On the first Sunday of every month, BFA Water Quality Team Members visit permanent stations and sample area waters for laboratory analyses. Annual training is coordinated through Richard Olsen with the FL Dept of Environmental Protection (FDEP). Interested in becoming a member of the team? Please contact Richard at 850.433.7876, and be prepared to have fun and learn about our area landscape and waters.

Dear BFA Membership,

Water Quality issues continue to plague our state's waters. 2013 was a bad year for manatees. For the first time since record-keeping began in the 1970s, our state's manatee death toll reached 800 in a single year. According to officials, that's almost 16% of the estimated population of 5,000 – which means that this species is in peril.

State geologists are busy mapping sinkholes as they begin to plumb the depth of the state's vulnerability to ground collapse. Sinkholes are common in peninsular Florida because of porous rock, such as limestone, that stores water underground.

In other states, chemicals banned decades ago are being discovered in dead Illinois River Otters.

The Central Florida Water Initiative plan to suck millions of gallons from the St. Johns and the Ocklawaha River will certainly add to the stresses via harmful water withdrawals. Central Florida is already reaching beyond the sustainable limits of its predominant source of water, the Florida aquifer system, with water use expected to continue to increase from 772 million gallons a day (mgd) in 2010 to over 1,246 mgd in 2035, things can only get worse.

Groundwater removal, impaired water quality, manatee and porpoise deaths, loss of seagrass meadows, sedimentation, all serve to diminish the quality and quantity that our ecosystems require to function properly. Our ecosystem does not recognize economic currency, but a healthy ecosystem can drive a healthy community by supporting clean water for shrimp, fish, oysters, birds, and a host of other organisms, including you and I. Healthy uplands allow for healthy waters. The way we develop, where we develop, and how we live will determine what enters our groundwater and surface water. The little snail that you might have overlooked is highly susceptible to some chemicals, but has an important role in grazing the blades on our seagrasses – and frankly, without him in the ecosystem there is a piece missing from the puzzle, and the picture is incomplete.



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Multiple researchers from the Endangered Species Committee published the results of a study in the American Fisheries Society (June 2013) in which they conducted an assessment of freshwater gastropods (snails) from Canada and the United States. Of the 703 species which represented 16 families and 93 genera, 67 species are considered extinct, 278 are endangered, 102 are threatened, 73 are vulnerable, 157 are currently stable, and 26 species have uncertain taxonomic status. Bottom line is that 74% of snails are imperiled. Along those lines, 39% of fish species, 48% of crayfish, and 72% of mussels are found to exceed imperilment levels.

The study points to habitat loss, degradation, particularly narrow endemics (small localized areas) in springs and short reaches of rivers. Many causes of habitat degradation include dams, impounded reaches, channelization, erosion, excessive sedimentation, groundwater withdrawals, removal of woody material which impacts surface streams through aeration (flows, temperature, dissolved oxygen), creation of deep water holds, riffles, and reaches, multiple forms of pollution (salts, metals particularly Cu, Hg, and Zn, untreated sewage, agricultural runoff) and invasive species.

The 1999 Grand Jury Investigation describes 'Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties as an area rich in history, diverse in culture, and natural beauty. It has bountiful natural resources, including long stretches of gulf beaches, estuaries, rivers, marshes, coastal dunes, and inland forests, which are great attractions, as well as important economic assets'.

The findings noted, 'We also saw that growth without a plan is not development. Merely getting bigger, or building more structures, roads, or bridges does not move us forward; nor is it sustainable. Such growth wastes and often exhausts irreplaceable resources. Only when we act upon a sound plan can we have sustainable development, which protects and maintains our resources for their best present and future resources'.

Fifteen years later, what have we learned and are our resources improving or continuing to be impaired? The Grand Jury Report found that local government officials were too often more interested in promoting and protecting the current interests of industry and business, especially the home builders, without any attempt to tilt those particular interests towards a community plan that allows for rational and sustainable development.

Escambia County is in the process of updating their Land Development Code (LDC). Same song, second verse! Instead of enforcing or strengthening the current codes, they are relaxing them. Isolated wetlands will not receive any protection and can be permitted for filling and development even though we know that this removes valuable habitat and recharge areas for our groundwater and accelerates flooding during heavy rain events. The tree ordinance that the County and Emerald Coast Keepers worked hard to include in the previous land development code will likely be removed – and as we saw with the recent Scenic Highway & I-10 oak grove, the development of Hilton Garden Inn, and the medical complex next to Lowes on Airport Blvd, in the Carpenters Creek watershed - there was no enforcement. The relaxed LDC won't even promote the planting of wind resistant native species, which are well suited to withstand our hot, wet summers and crazy winter temperatures.

Santa Rosa County has a strong group of citizens who have helped establish a well head protection zone in the area that supplies groundwater for the coastal communities of Gulf Breeze, Holley, and Navarre. Escambia County wishes to punt this issue and enforcement to ECUA – when they clearly are perched in the best seat to provide oversight, codes, and protection. Thank you Santa Rosa County...Okay Escambia County, would you like some help with this issue?



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The Bream Fishermen Association is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of the conservation responsibilities as well as the recreational enjoyment of fishermen, hunters, campers and related outdoorsmen.

It is the objective of the BFA to support, develop, and implement programs that will:

- 1) Improve the quality of our environment;
- 2) Protect and maintain our present wilderness type lakes, rivers, swamps, marshes, bays, forests, and beaches in their natural undeveloped state; and
- 3) Advance the causes of plant, marine, and wildlife preservation.

Membership is open to all individuals who support these objectives. Please join the BFA by sending us your contact information (name, mailing address, phone, and email) be sure to notify us if you prefer to receive notices and announcements by mail or email, and \$10 annual dues to our mailing address: 1203 North 16th Ave, Pensacola, FL 32503

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