

# Many chores await money for Loxahatchee

Thanks to the continued support of local officials and residents of the community, The Loxahatchee River Initiative has \$2.5 million waiting for Gov. Jeb Bush's signature.

State Sens. Ken Pruitt and Jeff Atwater and state Reps. Carl Domino and Joe Negron have championed our cause to preserve the first nationally designated Wild and Scenic River in the State of Florida.

The Watershed Committee was formed in 1996 under the Florida Department of Environmental Protection put a spotlight on the many problems of the Loxahatchee River.

The historic watershed is over 750 square miles, and has been reduced by flood control basins and drainage districts to approximately 277 square miles in southern Martin County and northern Palm Beach County.

Over the past 30 years, the Loxahatchee River has undergone many changes caused by urbanization of the region, land development and water control practices.

Several key projects are in the 2004 request for funding from the State of Florida:

► **Jones Creek Restoration Phase 2:** Jones Creek is a primary urban tributary to the Loxahatchee River.

Both the natural portion and manmade extensions of the creek receive stormwater runoff from commercial, industrial and residential areas within the Town of Jupiter and unincorporated areas of the county.

Jones Creek will be restored through the removal of exotic vegetation and materials that are a source of pollutants to the River.

► **Kitching Creek Restoration Phase 2:** Kitching Creek is a major tributary to the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River. The creek traverses Jonathan Dickinson State Park and empties into the Wild and Scenic Fork



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of the Loxahatchee River. This project will improve water quality treatment for runoff from a significant portion of the Kitching Creek Basin.

Redistribution of water into stormwater areas will provide reduction of nutrients to Kitching Creek and the North and Northwest Forks of the Loxahatchee River. The project will also provide additional flows to the Loxahatchee River for habitat restoration and restore wetlands.

► **Jonathan Dickinson State Park Water Quality Improvements:** Jonathan Dickinson State Park campsites and the Boy Scout Camp depend on on-site water supply wells and wastewater disposal facilities. This project will provide public water and wastewater facilities. The benefits of this project is the reduction in public health risks due to the use of potentially unsafe water supply and the reduction of environmental impacts to the river through the elimination of wastewater contamination.

These are the major projects that will be started if Gov. Bush approves the money.

The Loxahatchee River Preservation Initiative Committee is a good example of the Watershed Area Community working together for the preservation of our unique resources in northern Palm Beach County and southern Martin County.

Please let Gov. Bush know how much we appreciate the funding of our projects for the 2004 Legislative session.

*Pat Magrogan is a past president and current vice president of the non-profit Friends of the Loxahatchee.*