



Lovin' the Loxahatchee

River Segment Series #1—Floodplains



Floodplain forests and marshes are a vital component for the Loxahatchee River watershed. They function as a "sponge" absorbing water during heavy precipitation times, such as tropical storms during the wet season. The floodplains slow the water flow, preventing large amounts of water from rushing down the river. Fast flowing water can stir up sediments and decrease water quality. Slowing the water flow and absorbing the water also prevents flooding in urban areas.

As the water sits in the floodplains, the nutrients settle out to the bottom where they are absorbed by the plants, such as grasses and cypress trees. The plants provide filtration and actually clean the water for us. As the wet season ends and dry season approaches, the floodplains release the water back into the river channel. The water going back in is cleaner because the plants have removed some of the nutrients.

Finally, the floodplain wetlands provide valuable habitat for our native wildlife such as alligators, herons, owls, small fish, and endangered

wood storks.

If you haven't already, stop by the River Center to see a floodplain in action at our Floodplains exhibit! Next month we will explore our mangrove communities.



LOXAHATCHEE RIVER ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

RIVER TIDINGS

Creature Feature—Balloonfish Puffer

Perhaps you've seen this friendly face peering out at you from the mangrove exhibit at the River Center. She is a balloonfish (*Diodon holocanthus*). Balloonfish are found over seagrasses, in mangroves, and on coral reefs. They are slow swimmers using mainly their front pectoral fins to swim. The tail fin acts more like a rudder, helping to steer the fish through the water. They are able to inflate themselves with water if



they feel threatened. When they do, their spines stick

straight out making them very prickly. This will deter most predators from wanting to have them for a snack.

There are two balloonfish at the River Center. One is in the mangrove exhibit and the other is in one of the small aquariums in our critter cabinet. They are very curious and like to meet our visitors, so please stop by and say hello!

THANK YOU!

RIVER CENTER SPONSORS

Arrington Family

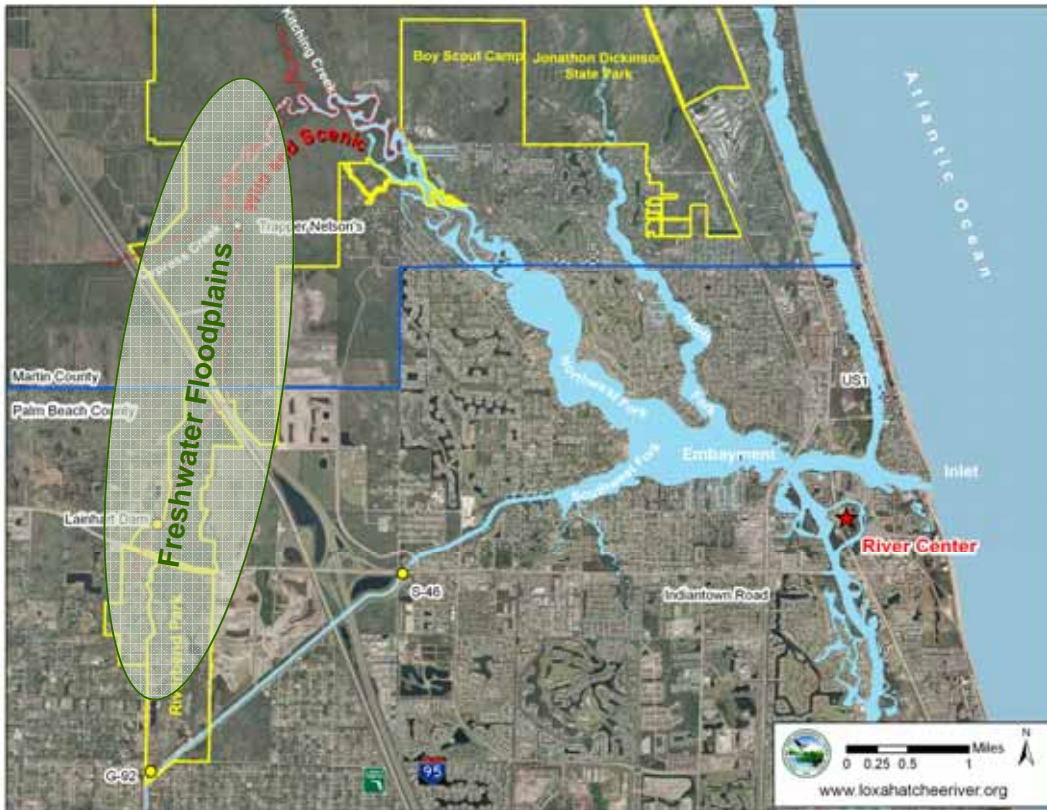
Our annual River Center sponsors are recognized on our donor wall at the entrance. Each tile is 50% off for 2009, so become a sponsor today!

Upcoming Events:

- April 3—FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT—featuring "Wall-E" - \$5 (includes popcorn and drink for each child). 6-8 p.m. (child under 8 years old must be accompanied by an adult)
- April 8—9 a.m.—RIVER TOTTERS—Arts & Crafts (general ages 1-6) - \$1.00
- April 9 & 23—2:30 p.m.—UTTERLY OTTERLY PLAY—Storytime and Arts & Crafts—small fee (ages 3-10)
- April 15—10 a.m.—MINI-MOVIE DAY—(ages 0-6) \$3 (includes popcorn and juice box):

Lookin' at the Loxahatchee

Get a bird's eye view



River Fast Facts

- 10 major freshwater and saltwater habitats provide homes for a wide variety of wildlife.
- It is a peaceful, slow flowing river.
- Federally designated as a “Wild and Scenic River” in 1985. There are only two Wild and Scenic Rivers in Florida.
- The river is surrounded by many natural areas that are still intact and publicly owned. For example, nine miles of the Loxahatchee River, including the Wild and Scenic portion, flow through Riverbend Park (west on Indian town Road) and Jonathan Dickinson State Park (U.S. Highway 1 - South of Hobe Sound).
- Watershed Area = 260 square miles
- Natural Area = 63%

Major Habitats:

Cypress swamp
Freshwater Marshes
Hardwood Hammock
Mangrove swamp
Seagrass beds
Oyster reefs or beds
Estuary (Lagoons and Inlets)

Endangered Species:

Wood stork
Florida Panther
Manatee

Common Species of interest:

Bird: Blue Heron, Egret, Osprey, Ibis
Plant: Cypress, Mangroves, Seagrape,
Cabbage Palm, Slash Pine
Fish: Snook, Snapper, Bass

Did You Know?

- Every ton of recycled office paper saves 380 gallons of oil.
- Glass produced from recycled glass instead of raw materials reduces related air pollution by 20%, and water pollution by 50%.
- Energy saved from one recycled aluminum can will operate a TV set for 3 hours, and is the equivalent to half a can of gasoline.

MOVIE DAY



In the distant future, a small waste collecting robot inadvertently embarks on a space journey that will ultimately decide the fate of mankind.

Friday, April 3

(6-9p)

\$5—Includes Popcorn and Drink

561-743-7123

Children under 8 years old must be accompanied by an adult. Children over 8 may be dropped off with the signature of a parent/guardian.