



September 7, 2001

B. Terry Johnson
Planning Manager
Planning Department
Southwest Florida Water Management District
2379 Broad Street
Brooksville, FL 34604-6899

RE: Comments on MFL schedule

Dear Mr. Johnson,

In 1995, Charlotte Harbor was recognized as an "estuary of national significance" and was accepted into the National Estuary Program. Over a three-year period, literally hundreds of individuals participated in a process to define the watershed's priority problems and to develop a plan of action to address these problems. The Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for the Greater Charlotte Harbor watershed received its final approval from the United States Environmental Protection Agency in June 2001.

The Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program is a partnership of citizens, elected officials, resource managers, and commercial and recreational resource users working to improve the water quality and ecological integrity of the greater Charlotte Harbor watershed. A cooperative decision-making process is used within the program to address diverse resource management concerns in the 4,400 square mile study area.

Within the CCMP, there are fifteen quantifiable objectives addressing these priority problems backed by 48 priority actions and numerous strategies. Quantifiable Objective HA-1, developed, in part, with the cooperation and endorsement of SWFWMD representatives tasks the NEP to:

Establish values for minimum seasonal flows beginning with the Myakka River at State Road 72 and for Big Slough; the Peace River at Bartow, Zolfo Springs, and Arcadia; and for the tributaries Horse Creek, Joshua Creek, Shell Creek, and the lower Peace River/upper estuary by the year 2005. Achieve these minimum seasonal flows by the year 2020.

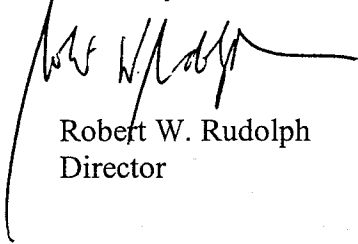
While we are pleased to note that your proposed schedule for the Peace River MFLs is proposed to be completed by 2003, we would like to see that the Myakka River be considered in an earlier sequence than that which is currently proposed. Although we

are acutely aware that the Myakka River basin has not experienced the "drought" conditions which the Peace River Basin has recently, and in fact, is currently reported to contain too much water, we would greatly appreciate it if the Myakka be considered in a timeframe consistent with our CCMP. In addition, it should be pointed out that the Myakka River is increasingly being mentioned as a potential source of drinking water to serve the region's growing water needs.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the Myakka River be considered for inclusion within the list of waterbodies to have MFLs established by the year 2005.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 941-995-1777.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Rudolph", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert W. Rudolph
Director