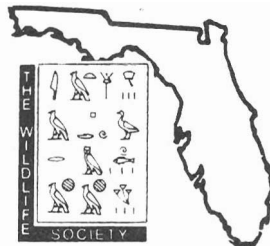


FLORIDA CHAPTER
THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY




3991 SE 27th Court
Okeechobee, Florida 33472

MEMORANDUM

September 13, 1983

TO: Executive Board--Florida Chapter TWS

FROM: Frank Montalbano III 

SUBJECT: Board Meeting Minutes and Public Statement

Enclosed are copies of 1) the minutes of the August 18, 1983 Executive Board meeting revised per your comments, and 2) a summary of my comments for the Chapter at the August 10, 1983 hearing on restoration of the Kissimmee River. Copies of both are furnished to Mike Allen for his use as appropriate in the Newsletter.

Enclosures (2)

cc: Mike Allen

Summary of Chapter
Comments at a Public Hearing on the
Kissimmee River Restoration, August 10, 1983

The following summarizes comments made by Frank Montalbano III on behalf of the Chapter at a public hearing on restoration of the Kissimmee River. The hearing was conducted by the Coordinating Council for the Restoration of the Kissimmee River, Taylor Creek-Nubbin Slough Basin in Okeechobee FL on August 10, 1983. Additional hearings were held in St. Cloud (August 9) and West Palm Beach (August 11).

Background information on the Florida Chapter, and on the credentials of the speaker (Frank Montalbano III) were presented as an introduction. Reference was made to the Chapter resolution of September 1979, which supported ". . . restoration of the unique riverine wetlands ecosystem in the form and extent existing prior to channelization."

Two "restoration" alternatives had been identified by the Coordinating Council for consideration. These included a "partial backfilling" alternative, which provided for backfilling of approximately 53 percent of the C-38 Canal, and a "combined wetlands" alternative which called for creation of an extensive, structurally regulated wetland system while maintaining the C-38 Canal. Montalbano pointed out that these alternative had been selected based upon the assumption that the existing project provided substantial urban flood protection in the Upper Kissimmee Basin. **He added that information** recently developed by the Corps of Engineers raised questions about flood protection benefits provided in the Upper Basin, and that this new information should prompt reconsideration of a "complete backfilling" alternative.

While acknowledging that the "combined wetlands" alternative could provide substantial fish and wildlife benefits, several deficiencies were noted in both the concept, and in the Corps' presentation of cost/benefit analyses. Principal among these were the Corps' failure to include costs of operation and maintenance of the structural system in cost projection; failure to include the costs of the extensive and intensive wildlife management measures necessary to generate the wildlife benefits cited; and the conflicts (operation of the Central and South Florida Project was cited as an example) inherent in operation of a structural system designed to serve multiple purposes.

It was further pointed out the "relatively natural" ecosystem which would result from the "partial backfilling alternative" would provide equal or greater benefits, without the aforementioned deficiencies. Thus, Montalbano gave support to the backfilling alternatives as the preferred method of restoring the Kissimmee River.