DRAFT REPORT - 8758 CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER OXBOWS: ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY

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INTRODUCTION

The Caloosahatchee river extends from the southwest shore of Lake Okeechobee, near Moore Haven, to the Gulf of Mexico near Ft. Myers. The Caloosahatchee River is the major waterway in southwest Florida, and serves multiple functions by providing for navigation, recreation, irrigation, drainage, and as a source for potable water.

Earliest attempts to "improve" the Caloosahatchee River for navigation were begun by Hamilton Disston during the 1880's. At present, the Caloosahatchee River, designated C-43, is an improved channel, about 50-130 meters wide and 6 to 9 meters deep. The Moore Haven Lock (HGS No. 1) and Structure 77 (S-77) mark the eastern end of C-43 at Lake Okeechobee. The Ortona Locks (S-78) are located 24 km to the west. Water stages upstream of S-78 are maintained at approximately 3.5 meters ms1. The Franklin Locks (S-79), 66 km west of Lake Okeechobee, separates the fresh water river from the tidal influenced estuary. Water levels in the western reach of the Caloosahatchee River are maintained at approximately 1.0 meter ms1.

Between the Franklin Locks and the City of LaBelle, 29 km to the east, are 35 oxbows extending from the canal. These oxbows are remnants of the original river channel which was severed during digging of the canal. C-43 is a very steep sided canal, whose banks are subjected to considerable erosion from wakes caused by large boat traffic. Consequently, the shallow water areas along the sides of C-43 are limited and not conducive to the establishment of aquatic plant communities in such an unstable environment. Therefore, some of the oxbows may provide shallow, vegetated areas which are more suitable for fish and wildlife than C-43. For a variety of reasons, requests have been made to this District and other agencies to purchase, fill, dredge or otherwise alter some of the Caloosahatchee River oxbows. The purpose of this investigation is, therefore, to identify and catalogue the oxbows in C-43, and to conduct a cursory sampling program which would indicate the current environmental status of these areas, as well as document the ecological attributes of the oxbows compared to the canal habitats.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Recent aerial photography was used to identify and locate oxbows along the Caloosahatchee River, for mapping purposes, and to estimate oxbow sizes. Aerial photographs obtained from Lee County were taken in 1975 and prepared by the Florida Dept. of Transportation (1:3600). United States Dept of Agriculture SCS photography of Hendry County was taken in 1974 (1:2400). Mark Hurd aerial photography (1972) of the entire Caloosahatchee River was also used. These photos were scale 1:24,000.

As each oxbow was located in the field, a preliminary inventory was conducted. This consisted of taking depth soundings across the oxbow in approximately three to five locations. An Ekman dredge was used to obtain a sample of bottom sediments from two to five locations in each oxbow. The sediments were examined in the field and described by the investigator. The sediment components are listed in this report in estimated order of abundance. Finally, areas in each oxbow occupied by aquatic vegetation were mapped, and the most common species were listed.

The thirty-five oxbows inventoried were classified according to general characteristics, such as average water depth, predominant nature of sediments, and whether the oxbow was open or closed. Seven oxbows were then selected which represented the range of conditions encountered in the preliminary

survey. The detailed sampling program of the seven representative oxbows included:

1. <u>Benthic Fauna Sampling</u>. Three transects were established across each oxbow. Four Ekman grabs (totaling 0.09 m^2) were combined from along each transect. The contents of the dredge were washed in a U.S. Standard Sieve No. 30, and the remaining organisms and debris preserved in 10% formalin with Rose bengal stain. In the laboratory the samples were rinsed with fresh water, organisms separated from debris, identified to genus and species by Edward Terczak, and counted.

The water depth and a description of the bottom sediments were recorded at the time of collection.

2. <u>Benthic Sediment Analysis</u>. Descriptions of benthic sediments, especially those which consist of various amounts of organic material, may not be consistent or accurate. Therefore, two samples of bottom substrate were obtained from each of the seven oxbows, including as wide of a range of bottom types as possible. Samples were placed into quart jars and frozen until analyzed. Chemical analysis consisted of percent organic material, percent inorganic material (marl) and percent insoluble ash (sand), and percentage of nitrogen and phosphorus. Physical measurements consisted of a particle size analysis (clay, silt, and sand) of the insoluble ash portion.

3. <u>Associated Phytomacrofauna Sampling</u>. Two methods were employed to sample invertebrate macrofauna and other organisms which inhabit the vegetated zones in the oxbow.

At one location in each oxbow, 5 replicate Hester Dendy samplers of the circular design (EPA, 1973), with an effective surface area of 0.13 m^2 ,

were suspended from 0.5 to 0.75 m underwater near the shore of the oxbow. The samples were incubated for 28 to 29 days. Upon retrieval, each sampler was disassembled, scraped clean and rinsed with fresh water. All organisms were collected by screening through a U.S. Standard No. 30 sieve and preserved with 10% formalin. In the laboratory all organisms were identified and enumerated.

A qualitative sample of free swimming organisms and those attached to floating vegetation were collected from each oxbow with a small mesh dip net.

4. <u>Primary Productivity</u>. Artificial substrates were used to document the growth of periphytic algae in the oxbows. One periphytometer^(R) II, holding eight glass slides (24.5 x 75 mm) each was situated in each oxbow adjacent to the Hester Dendy samplers for a period of 28 to 29 days. Periphytometers were also placed along the edge of C-43 in several locations during this same interval. Upon retrieval glass slides were removed from the holders, placed individually into glass bottles and stored for 1 to 2 days on ice in the dark. In the laboratory the slides were scraped and washed, then the algae was filtered onto 0.45 micron pore size Gelman glass fiber filters. Photosynthetic pigments were extracted by grinding the filters in 90% acetone, and chlorophyll <u>a</u> concentrations were determined by the trichromatic method (Strickland and Parsons, 1972).

5. <u>Fishes</u>. The larger fish inhabiting selected oxbows and the edges of C-43 were sampled by electroshocking (240V). All individuals captured were identified, measured, and returned to the water. Species observed but not captured were noted.

6. <u>Water Chemistry</u>. An effort was made to compare water quality in the oxbows with water quality in C-43. Two or three samples were collected from each oxbow on July 14, 1978, one day after the routine water quality sampling run was made on the Caloosahatchee River. Samples were taken from the surface and near the bottom of the water column where the water was sufficiently deep. A Hydrolab^(R) Surveyor II was used to measure dissolved oxygen, temperature, specific conductivity and pH at 0.5 m intervals through the water column at each site. Water samples were filtered through 0.45 micron nucleopore filter and analyzed by Standard Methods or APHS methods for nitrogen and phosphorus species, silica, sulfate, chloride, alkalinity, sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, and color. Unfiltered samples were analyzed for total Kjeldahl nitrogen, total phosphorus and turbidity.

RESULTS

OXBOW INVENTORY

Figure 1 shows the Caloosahatchee River (C-43) from LaBelle to the Franklin Locks (S-79) and the location of the oxbows inventoried as a portion of this survey. All 35 oxbows are located west of the city of LaBelle. Appendix I provides an initial inventory of each oxbow, and includes a scale map, several water depth profiles, descriptions of bottom sediments, and depicts the distribution of the most abundant plant species.

These 35 oxbows range in area from less than one acre (number 23) to 11.6 acres (number 2), and in length from about 390 feet (number 14) to 2370 feet (number 10). Twenty of the oxbows are open, eleven are blocked either by floating vegetation mats or emergent aquatic vegetation, and four are completely blocked from the canal on one end by fill or sediment.

Water depths in the oxbows are variable, although the maximum depths recorded in most of the oxbows was between 5 and 10 feet. Only three oxbows (numbers 3, 11, and 15) were considered deeper than average, and nine oxbows (12, 16, 17, 21, 23, 24, 27, 34, and 35) had maximum depths less than 5 feet.



Sediments in the oxbows were predominantly organic ranging from well decomposed, very fine particulate matter described as mud or ooze, to a coarse peatwith plant detritus fragments. These organic deposits were variable in thickness, ranging from only a few inches to several feet in depth. The bottom substrate in a few oxbows consisted of sand, shell fragments, or marl. Several types of benthic algae also colonized some of the oxbow substrates.

The sides of these oxbows generally drop steeply from the exposed river bank, and the anticipated, gently sloping vegetated, littoral zone did not occur regularly. Aquatic or semi-aquatic vegetation was generally of 3 types:

- 1) emergent vegetation growing in shallow water areas
- 2) floating mat vegetation communities
- 3) overhanging river bank vegetation

The most abundant emergent vegetation in the Caloosahatchee River oxbows was spatterdock (<u>Nuphar advena</u>), wild rice (<u>Zizania aquatica</u>), and cattail (<u>Typha sp</u>.). Floating mats of aquatic vegetation were usually dominated by alligator weed (<u>Alternanthera philoxeroides</u>) floating maidencane (<u>Sacciolepis striata</u>), water lettuce (<u>Pistia stratoites</u>) and primrose willow (<u>Ludwigia peruviana</u>). Overhanging riverbank vegetation consisted primarily of taro (<u>Colocasia esculentum</u>), leather fern (<u>Acrosticum sp</u>), coastal plain willow (<u>Salix caroliniana</u>), popash (<u>Fraxinus caroliniana</u>), and wax myrtle (<u>Myrica cerifera</u>). Table 1 provides a listing of the plant species encountered along the Caloosahatchee River oxbows and/or the islands, their common name, the two letter code used in Appendix I, and their distribution.

TABLE 1 : Plant Species in the Caloosahatchee River Oxbows

Species	<u>Common name</u>	Code	Distribution*
Acrosticum sp.	leather fern	ac	3,2
Alternanthera philoxeroides	alligator weed	al	2
Annona glabra	pondapple	an	3
Carya aquatica	water hickory	ca	3
Cicuta mexicana	water hemlock	cc	3
Cladium jamaicense	sawgrass	cl	1
Colocasia esculentum	taro	со	3
Eichhornia crassipes	water hyacinth	ei	2
Fraxinus caroliniana	pop ash	fx	3
Hibiscus grandiflorus	swamp hibiscus	hi	3
Hydrocotyle sp.	pennywort	hy	2
Ludwigia peruviana	primrose willow	ไน	2
Myrica cerifera	wax myrtle	my	3,4
Nuphar advena	spatterdock	nu	1
Panicum hemitomon	maidencane	ph	1
Panicum paludivagum		pp	1
Panicum repens	torpedo grass	pr	1,2
Phrogmites australis	reed	pq	1
Pinus elliottii	slash pine	pn	4
Pistia stratoites	water lettuce	pi	2
Polvgonum sp.	smartweed	po	1,2
Pontederia lanceolata	pickerelweed	pt	1
Psidium quaiava	guava	ps	3,4
Quercus sp.	oaks	ģu	3,4
Sabal palmetto	cabbage palm	sb	3,4
Sacciolepis striata	floating maidencane	SS	Ź
Sagittaria latifolia	arrowhead	sq	1
Salix caroliniana	coastal plain willow	sx	3
Sambucus simpsonii	florida elder	sa	3
Schinus terebinthifolius	brazilian pepper	st	3.4
Scirnus cubensis	brazilian poppor	SC	Ź
Taxadium distichum	cypress	tx	1.3.4
Typha sp.	cattail	tv	1
Zizania aquatica	wild rice	zi	1

* (1) emergent (2) floating (3) river bank (4) terrestrial

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Because water levels in the Caloosahatchee River are generally stabilized, diversity of emergent vegetation is low. In contrast, the banks of the oxbows provide perhaps the most desirable habitat to support aquatic and water tolerant species of plants. These overhanging plants may be partially submerged in the water. They provide shade and shelter but also contribute considerable organic material into the water in the form of leaf litter and plant detritus. Floating mat communities are indicative of stabilized water levels, and also indicate that water flows through the oxbows are minimal. Nine of the eleven oxbows that were blocked by vegetation had extensive floating mats of vegetation. These mats block sunlight to the water beneath, reduce dissolved oxygen levels and contribute organic material.

DETAILED SAMPLING

The seven oxbows selected for more detailed environmental analysis were numbers 3, 10, 15, 20, 21, 24, and 28. Figures 2 to 4 show these oxbows and the locations of the various sampling sites. Oxbow 3 is open, has a maximum depth of 12 feet and organic sediments. Oxbow 10 is open with an average depth of about 5 feet and organic sediments. Oxbow 12 is open with maximum depth of 11 feet and sandy sediments. Oxbow 20 is open, about 5 feet deep, and has sand dominated sediments. Oxbow 21 is blocked on the east side by an extensive mat of floating vegetation, averages about 4 feet deep, and has sediments dominated by peat and detritus. Oxbow 24 is open but heavily vegetated by spatterdock, averages about 3 feet deep, and is dominated by organic sediments. Oxbow 28 is blocked on the east side by a sand bar, the water depth varies from 7 1/2 to 2 feet, but averages 5 feet, and has organic sediments.





Oxbow Benthos

Benthic macrofauna samples were taken from the seven Caloosahatchee River oxbows at water depths ranging from 0.5 to 4.0 meters, (1.5 to 12 feet), with an average depth of 1.5 meters (5 feet)(Table 2).

A total of 28 different species of organisms were collected in these samples. The average density of individuals recovered from the samples was $79/ft^2$ ($848/m^2$). This figure is misleading, however, since 53% of all individuals collected were <u>Chaoborus punctipennis</u> at oxbow 28. Benthic macrofauna density in the other six oxbows was low, ranged from $19/ft^2$ ($201/m^2$) in oxbow 15 to $64/ft^2$ ($692/m^2$) in oxbow 10, and averaged $34/ft^2$ ($365/m^2$).

Three species, <u>Tubifex tubifex</u>, <u>Gammarus fasciatus</u>, and <u>Chaoborus</u> <u>punctipennis</u>, were collected from each of the oxbows and collectively accounted for 88% of the total numbers of individuals. <u>Cyathura polita</u>, <u>Corbicula leana</u>, <u>Ablabesmyia cinctipes</u>, and <u>Polypedilum halteri</u>, were the four next most abundant species.

<u>Tubifex tubifex</u>, <u>Gammaris fasciatus</u> and <u>Cyathura polita</u> are scavangers and feed on algae, vegetation and plant detritus. <u>Ablabesmyia cinctipes</u>, <u>Polypedilum halterali</u> and <u>Chaoborus punctipennis</u> are primarily predators which feed on rotifers and microcrustacea. <u>C. punctipennis</u> often feeds extensively on <u>Tubifex tubifex</u>. <u>Corbicula</u> is a filter feeding pelecypod that would not be expected in great abundance in fine, organic sediments that dominant the oxbow bottoms, since it usually prefers sandy bottoms and moving water.

The oxbows with sandy sediments (15 and 20) had lower density of organisms, 201 and $273/m^2$, respectively and higher diversity indices than

		Oxbow #	3.5-	1.0-	15 0.9-	20 0.6-	21 0.8-	24 0.5-	28 0.6-		
		Ueptn in meters Open/Closed Substrate type * Deep/Moderate/Shallow	0000 m	000X	0.0 N D	- - - -	NOC.	0000	2002 V	Total Number	Relative Abundance
Annel ida	Tubificidae	Tubifex tubifex Limnodrilus hoffmeisteri	143	136	54 22	122 11	108	122 14	466	1151	19.4 0.8
Amphipoda	Hirudinea Gammaridae Cerophiidae	Gammarus fasciatus Corophium lacustre	4	11 366 4	18	54	22	104	7	18 574 4	0.3 0.7 0.1
Decapoda Isopoda	Palaemonidae Anthuridae	Palaemonetes paludosus Cyathura polita	32		22	~ ~	4 r	11	7	75	0.1 .3
Pelecypoda	spriaeroniaci uae Corbiculidae Ilnionidae	cassignigae junifrons Corbicula leana Anodonta imberilus	1	==	36 4	32 4	-	32	50	172	20.0
Diptera	Chironomidae	Ablabesmyia cinctipes Chironomus so	14	36	22	4		14	4	63 72	1.0
		Chironomus sp: Chironomus carus Chironomus crassicalidatus	⊢	-					32	988 878	0.5
		Chironomus stigmaterus Cryptochironomus fulvus		22		7			44	32.4	0.1
		Glyptotendipes paripes Orthocladius sp.							25 4	55 4	0.1
		Pentaneurini sp.	7		~ '		2	-	r	81	
		Procladius sp.	22		-	- - -	4	14	-	43	0.7
	Culicidae	Tribelos sp. Chaoborus punctipennis	43	82	. 4	4 1	230	11	3128	3505 3505	0.1 59.0
Ephemeroptera	ueratopogonidae Baetidae Caenidae	bezzia sp. Callibaetis floridanus Caenis diminuta		4	4			ব	4	442	
Odonata Pisces	Libellulidae Percidae	Perithemis seminole Etheostoma fusiforme	4		- 4		4	- 2		14	0.1
Total # # Indiv Shannon	Species iduals/m ² Weaver đ		10 301 2.46	11 692 2.14	12 201 3.07	12 273 2.55	8 384 1.62	11 337 2.52	15 3752 0.91	28 5940	100.2
* 0 = organic											

BENTHIC FAUNA RECOVERED FROM SELECTED CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER OXBOWS, JANUARY 1978, NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS PER METER² ••

TABLE

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the other five oxbows with organic sediments. Oxbow 28 had the highest number of species collected, probably due to the wide range of depths and substrate types sampled. Five chironomid species were collected only from oxbow 28. Otherwise, the oxbows with sandy sediments also had a greater number of species than those oxbows with organic sediments.

Comparison With Canal (C-43) Benthos

The three species of benthic invertebrates which dominated the fauna of the canal bottom were <u>Tubifex tubifex</u>, <u>Chaoborus punctipennis</u>, and <u>Ablabesmyia cinctipes</u>. Each of these species were among the most abundant invertebrates collected from the oxbow benthic region. Only the amphipod, <u>Gammarus fasciatus</u>, which was abundant in the oxbows, was relatively scarce in C-43. However, this amphipod was extremely common in the artificial substrate samplers suspended in C-43 near the water surface.

Oxbow Sediment Analysis

Chemical and physical analyses of sediment samples from the seven oxbows (Table 3) showed no consistent correlation with the field description made at the time of collection. Whereas most sediments were described as mud with varying amounts of detritus, sand and shell, the chemical analysis indicated that these sediments were primarily composed of insoluble ash (sand) and calcium carbonate (marl) materials. A particle size analysis indicated that most of the sediments were clay loams or sandy clay loams.

All of the samples which described sand as a major component, (24a, 21b, 20 a+b, 15 a+b) had the highest percentage of insoluble ash (59-77%).

н 	SEDIMENI ANALYSIS, (CALOUSAHAICHE	- RIVER UXE	SUWS	Description based			
	Field Description	% Organic	% Marl	% Insoluble ash (sand)	on particle size distribution	% Nitrogen	% Phosphorus	
	det, pt md, det	33 14	13 28	54 58	sandy clay loam clay loam	1.07	.174 .175	
	sa, sh, md, det md, det	13 20	17 38	70 42	loam clay loam	.55 .81	.178 .168	
	md, det, sh sa, md, det	17 9	29 16	54 75	clay loam sandy clay loam	.78 .27	.181 .184	
	md, sa, det, al md, sa, sh, det	5	17 36	77 59	sandy clay loam clay loam	.16 .21	.143	
	md, sh, sa det, sh, md, sa	3	19 26	77 68	sandy clay loam sandy clay	.10	.119 .138	
	al, md, sh md, det, sh	17 22	31 39	52 39	clay loam clay loam	.73 .48	.228	
	md, det, sh md, det, sh, mr	16 12	34 42	51 47	clay clay	.57	.281	

al = algae, det = detritus, md = mud, mr = marl, pt = peat, sa = sand, sh = shell

CALONSAUATCHEE DIVED AVROUS CEDIMENT ANALVETC TABLE 3. The percentage of nitrogen in particular, and to a lesser extent phosphorus, also tend to group the more sandy sediments from the organic sediments. The average nitrogen content in oxbows 15 and 20 was 0.21% compared to 0.64% for the other oxbows. Oxbows 15 and 20 averaged .134% phosphorus in the sediments, compared to .211% phosphorus for the others.

In contrast, canal bottom sediments were sandy at the eastern portion of C-43, upstream of Ortona Lock, and had more organic and marl constituents downstream of Ortona. Average percent nitrogen and phosphorus in the canal downstream of Ortona was similar to the percentages reported for the oxbows - all of which were located downstream of Ortona.

Associated Phytomacrofauna

Table 4 summarizes the average density of organisms recovered in Hester Dendy samplers from six of the seven oxbows subjected to 4 week incubation periods. The samplers from oxbow 24 were not recovered. A total of 30 species of aquatic organisms were recovered from the six oxbows, with five additional species present in samplers which were allowed to incubate for six weeks. No species was present in samplers from each of the six oxbows, although six species (<u>Gammarus fasciatus</u>, 2 snails, <u>Pomatropsis sp.</u>, <u>Pomatopyragus sp</u>. and three chironomids, <u>Ablabesmyia cinctipes, Geoldchironomus holoprasinus</u> and <u>Polypedilum halteralii</u>) were present in five of the six oxbow samples. These six species, plus the mayfly larvae, <u>Caenus diminuta</u>, were the most abundant organisms accounting for 96.9% of all organisms collected. The snail, <u>Pomatropsis Sp</u>., which readily colonized the samplers, alone comprised 55% of all individuals organisms. : AQUATIC MACROFAUNA RECOVERED FROM CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER OXBOWS

			enthic	hallow later	egetate	Comments
Pisces	Centrarchidae	Enneacanthus gloriosus		N 3	× X	
	Cyprinodentidae	Leponis sp. Fundulus chrysotus			X X	
	Percidae	Lucaria goodei Etheostoma fusiforme	Y	Y	X	Wido dictribution
	Poeciliidae	Gambusia affinis Heterandia formosa	Λ	~	Ŷ	wide distribution
		Poecilia latipinna		х	x	
Annelida	Hirulinea		Х	X		
	lubificidae	Limnodrilus hoffmeisteri	X			
Amphipoda	Corophiidae	Corophium lacustre	X Y	X Y		
	Gammaridae	Gammarus fasciatus	x	Ŷ	х	Wide distribution
Decapoda	Palaemonidae	Palaemonetes paludosus	X		X	
Gastropoda	Ancylidae	Ferrissia sp.		X		
	Bythiniidae	Pomatiopsis sp.		X		
	Physidae	Physa pomila		X Y	Y	
	Pilidae	Pomacea paludosus		X	~	
	Planorbidae	Gyralus jenfensi			Х	
		Helisoma sp.		Х		
	Thianidao	Helisoma scalare		X	.,	
Pelecypoda	Corbiculidae	Corbicula leana	Y	X	X	
	Unionidae	Anodonta imbecilus	X			
Isopoda	Anthuridae	Cyathura polita	X	Х		
0.1	Aphaeromidae	Cassidinidea lunifrons	Х	Х	Х	Wide distribution
Coleoptera	Chrysomelidae	Donacia sp.		X		
	ayrinidae	Dineutes sp. Dineutes carolinus		X	v	
		Gvrinus elevatus		x	٨	
Diptera	Ceratopogonidae	Bezzia sp.	X			
i	Chivonomidae —	Probezzia sp.	v	X	X	
	Chironoliitade	Abiadesmyla cinctipes	X Y	~		
	,	Chironomus carus	χ.			
		Chironomus crassicaudatus	X			
10 10		Chironomus stignaterus	X	X	v	
		Cryptochironomus fulvus	x		^	
		Geoldchironomus holoprasinus	Л	Х		
		Glyptotendipes paripes	Х			
		Orthocladius sp.	Х			
		Parachironomus sp.	v		X	-
		Polvpedilum halterali	x X	X	X	Wide distribution
		Procladius sp.	Ŷ	Λ	Λ	
		Rheotanytarsus		Х		
	A 3 4 4 4	Tribelos sp.	X			
	Culicidae	Chaoborus punctipennis	Х	v		
		Culiseta inornata		A X		
	Stratiomyiidae	Odontomyia sp.		Λ	Х	
Ephemeroptera	Baetidae	Callibaetis floridanus	Х	Х		
11 4 4	Caenidae	Caenis diminata	Х	Х	v	
Hemiptera	Belastomatidae	Belastoma sp.			X v	
Odonata	libellulide	nymphura sp. Celithemis enonina	•	X	^	
	GINGI MITUUG	Pachydiplax longipennis		x	Х	
	-	Perithemis seminole	Х			
	0	Somatochlora filosa		X		
Tricontana	Loenigrionidae	Ischnura polita Hydropsyches sp		X Y		
rricoptera	Psychomviidae	Polvcentropus sp.		Ŷ		
		J		- -		

TABLE

Organism density on the samplers showed considerable variability, but the average was similar to that occurring naturally on the oxbow benthic substrate. Of the total 35 species collected, only 11 were also collected from the benthic substrate and 24 species were unique to the Hester Dendy samplers.

Additional organisms were collected from each oxbow by qualititively dipping a small mesh net in and amongst floating and emergent vegetation in each oxbow. A total of 24 species were collected by this method, including 8 species of small fishes, 3 species of snail and 6 species of dipterans. Again, this technique recovered 17 species that were not found on the benthic substrate, 15 species that were not recovered from the Hester Dendy artificial substrates, and 13 species that were unique altogether.

Table 5 summarizes the small fish and aquatic invertebrate organisms recovered from the Caloosahatchee River oxbows, and the type of habitats from which they were recovered. Altogether 64 species of aquatic macrofauna were recovered from Caloosahatchee River oxbows using a variety of sampling techniques. Only four of these species were recovered from all three of the habitats. Fifteen species were recovered by two of the sampling methods, and 45 species were recovered by only one of the techniques.

This sampling was cursory, and additional species could have likely been obtained by a more intensive sampling program. However, the data clearly shows the diversity of aquatic organisms which occupy the various niches unique to the oxbows associated with various types of vegetation, substrates, and water depths. TABLE

: AQUATIC MACROFAUNA COLONIZING HESTER DENDY SAMPLERS IN CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER OXBOWS FOR 4 WEEK INCUBATION PERIOD, JULY-AUGUST, 1978. NUMBER ORGANISMS PER SQUARE METER.

PiscesPercidae Etheostoma fusiforme Poeciliidae Poecilia latipinna43 *7 -AnnelidaHirulinea Tubificidae Tubifex tubifex622AmphipodaCorophiidae Corophium lacustre Gammaridae Gammarus fasciatus*3 66GastropodaAncylidae Ferrissia sp. Bythiniidae Pomatropsis sp. Pomatopyragus sp.415 192 2523020 5656 3 563 59 562 562	.1 .1 - 1.0 55.0 8.7 .1
AnnelidaHirulinea Tubificidae Tubifex tubifex626AmphipodaCorophiidae Corophium lacustre Gammaridae Gammarus fasciatus*3 15383633GastropodaAncylidae Ferrissia sp. Bythiniidae Pomatropsis sp. Pomatopyragus sp.415 1923020 25256 56359 562 562356 562 6359 562	.1 - 1.0 - 55.0 8.7 .1
AmphipodaCorophiidae Corophium lacustre Gammaridae Gammarus fasciatus*3 15383633GastropodaAncylidae Ferrissia sp. Bythiniidae Pomatropsis sp. Pomatopyragus sp.*3333Physidae Physa piula153020563593553656356565656562	- 1.0 - 55.0 8.7 .1
GastropodaAncylidae Ferrissia sp.33Bythiniidae Pomatropsis sp.4153020563593553Pomatopyragus sp.19225256356562Physidae Physa piula666	- 55.0 8.7 .1 -
Pilidae Pomacea paludosus 2 Planorbidae Helisoma sp. 2 Helisoma scalare 8 Thiaridae Melanoides tuberculata 42 8 5 55	- .1 .8
Isopoda Anthuridae Cyathura polita 3 3 Sphaeronidae Cassidinidea lunifrons 4 38 * 42	- .7
ColeopteraChrysomelidae Donacia sp.*3Gyrinidae Dineutes sp.*3Gyrinaus elevatus22	-
DipteraCeratopogonidae Probezzia sp. Chironomidae Ablabesmyia cinctipes*13147Geoldchironomus holoprasinnus54474213147Geoldchironomus holoprasinnus541239466021068Polypedilum halterali846842323220Chironomus stigmaterus88888Rheotanytarsus sp.3322CulicidaeCuliseta inornata222Culex territans*	- 2.3 16.8 3.4 .1 -
EphemeropteraCaenidaeCaenis diminuta61410218644BaetidaeCallibaetis floridanus666	10.0
OdonataLibellulidae Celithemis eponina Pachydiplax longipennis22812Somatochlora filosa Coenagrionidae Ischura polita*336	.2 .1 .2 .1
Tricoptera Hydropsychidae Hydropsyches sp. * 5 5	1
Total Number Individuals1478 3372 617 155 32 807 \bar{x} =1076Total Number Species10 14 10 9 11 14 Totl. N(15)(11)(19) (35)	99.5 No. Species = 30

**= samples inundated with <u>Pistia</u>

Primary Production

The growth of periphytic algae on submersed artificial substrates in Caloosahatchee River oxbows is dependent on many factors including the presence of periphytic algae in the water, availability of dissolved nutrients, water color and clarity, temperature and sunlight. Periphytometers placed in the seven oxbows showed a considerable variability in the amount of chlorophyll <u>a</u> attached during the incubation period. For instance oxbows 3, 20 and 28 produced over 10 times the amount of chlorophyll <u>a</u> as oxbows 21 and 24 (Table 6). In comparison, chlorophyll <u>a</u> accumulation in C-43 near oxbow 10 was similar to the high oxbow values, but accumulation in C-43 near oxbow 21 was extremely high, 3 to 4 times greater than all other measurements.

Water quality samples taken during the incubation period indicated little difference between oxbows, with the exception of excess inorganic nitrogen concentrations in oxbows 3 and 20 (nitrate and nitrite concentrations in all other oxbows were below the limits of analytical detection). However, it is not discernible with such limited data what the causes for the vast differences in primary production were. This is an area of study that could be further investigated.

Fishes

A cursory inventory of fish inhabiting the Caloosahatchee River oxbows and canal was made by electroshocking. Although the Caloosahatchee River is a freshwater habitat, several estuarine species pass through the Franklin Locks into the river. These sampling efforts revealed a much more diverse composition of species in the oxbow environments than in C-43.

<u>Oxbow #</u>	Number of Sites	Incubation Period (days)	x chl <u>a</u> mg/m ²	<u>s.d.</u>
3 10 15 20 21 24 28	8 4 8 8 8 8 8	29 29 28 28 28 28 28 28 28 28	32.8 16.2 16.1 28.2 3.0 3.0 38.0	10.0 3.5 2.2 11.2 1.3 2.4 6.7
C-43 by Oxbow 10	5	29	29.6	4.0
C-43 by Oxbow 21	8	28	112.0	27.4

TABLE 6. ACCUMULATION OF CHLOROPHYLL A ON PERIPHYTOMETERS INCUBATED IN C-43 AND OXBOWS, JULY - AUGUST, 1978.

Common Name	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Oxbow</u>	<u>Canal</u>
Largemouth bass	Micropterus salmoides	Х	
Bluegill	Lepomis microlophus		Х
Catfish	Ictalurus sp.		Х
Lake chubsucker	Erimyzon sucetta	Х	
Florida gar	Lepisosteus platyrhincus	Х	
Bowfin	Amia calva	Х	
Gizzard shad	Dorosoma cepedranum	Х	
Mullet	Mugil sp.	Х	Х
Snook	Centropomus undecimalis	Х	
Atlantic needlefish	Strongylura marina	Х	
Other Species Observed			

Tarpon

Megalops atlantica

Х

The above list, although obviously incomplete, indicates that the shallow water, protected habitats within the oxbows does provide food, shelter, and other conditions that may be more favorable to many species of fishes than C-43. Intensive sampling programs were previously undertaken by the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission (Horel, 1960; Ogilvie, 1965). These studies identified a larger number of species inhabiting this area, but concluded that salt water fish, primarily mullet, were the dominant species (Ogilvie, 1965). Both studies considered the importance of oxbows to the fishes of the Caloosahatchee River.

Observations made during this study, the two Game Commission studies (Horel, 1960; Ogilive, 1965) and by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (1957) all come to the conclusion that the Caloosahatchee River provides a limited resource for fresh or salt water sportfishing. The most likely location to encounter good sportfishing conditions is downstream of the Franklin Locks during discharge periods.

Water Quality

The Caloosahatchee River oxbows are relatively narrow and shallow in comparison with C-43, and may have little or no exchange of water with the canal. Water quality samples were taken in each of these oxbows concurrent with sampling in the canal during July 1978 to ascertain if detectable differences occurred.

Table 7 compares the surface water quality values from seven oxbows with the seven C-43 sample sites located in the river between LaBelle and Franklin Locks. Temperature, pH, total phosphrous and sulfate were higher in C-43 than in the oxbows, although temperature and pH can vary with the time of day, amount of sunlight, etc. Sodium and magnesium concentrations were significantly higher in the oxbow waters than in C-43, which may suggest a lack of water exchange between oxbows and canals. Overall, the data collected on this date shows similar quality between oxbow and canal waters.

Table 8 compares surface water quality parameters from the seven oxbows sampled. These data indicate little variability in water quality between the oxbows, with the exception of high nitrate values in oxbows 3 and 20, and low TKN values in oxbows 3, 10, 15, and 28. There were no discernible trends in water quality data evident when oxbows were grouped according to type (open, closed) or distance from Franklin Locks. Since water quality varies in the Caloosahatchee River with season, rainfall, and discharge, a more rigorous sampling schedule would have to be undertaken to investigate possible changes throughout the year.

SUMMARY

1. Since the 1880's the Caloosahatchee River has undergone substantial

_	C-4	3 ²	0xbd	ows ³	Significance ⁴
Parameter ⁵	x	s.d.	x	s.d.	99%
Temp ^O C	31.01	0.59	29.0	0.93	Х
Diss O ₂	6.77	1.38	5.83	0.91	
Sp. cond	279.71	7.83	286.0	10.89	
рН рН	7.54	0.13	7.33	0.16	Х
Secchi-m	1.21	0.15	1.07	0.25	
NO3	0.009	0.011	0.015	0.023	
NO ₂	0.010	0.009	0.004	0.000	
NH ₄	<0.01	0.00	<0.01	0.00	
TKN	1.63	0.42	1.65	0.54	
oP0 ₄	0.097	0.009	0.088	0.011	
TP04	0.141	0.010	0.126	0.010	Х
Tot diss.	PO ₄ 0.121	0.017	0.107	0.013	
Na	34.82	1.26	39.31	1.38	Х
К	3.97	0.14	4.27	1.12	
Ca	56.64	1.82	58.95	2.77	
Mg	9.56	0.17	10.88	0.61	Х
C1	57.01	1.11	59.95	3.00	
50 ₄	33.83	1.42	24.84	2.64	Х
Si0 ₂	7.94	0.08	7.76	0.24	
CaCO ₃	161.79	4.91	162.07	9.12	

TABLE COMPARISON OF WATER QUALITY PARAMETERS FROM CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER CANAL (C-43) and OXBOWS, JULY 11-13, 1978¹

¹ surface samples only ² stations 26, 30, 32, 36, 37, 39, 41 n=7 values ³ oxbows 3, 10, 15, 20, 21, 24, 28 n=15 values ⁴ based on 2 tailed students t test, 20 df ⁵ all units mg/l unless otherwise noted, except pH TABLECOMPARISON OF WATER QUALITY PARAMETERS FROM SEVEN CALOOSAHATCHEE
RIVER OXBOWS, JULY 13, 19781

Parameter	28	24	21	20	15	10	3
Temp ^O C	28.5	27.8	28.0	29.0	30.0	29.7	30.0
Diss. 0 ₂	4.6	5.1	5.0	6.4	6.5	5.8	6.4
Sp Cond umho/cm	280	285	305	295	280	280	280
рН	7.35	7.15	7.05	7.40	7.45	7.32	7.50
Secchi-m	0.95	0.58	1.05	1.10	1.35	1.20	1.20
NO ₃	<.004	<.004	<.004	.036	<.004	<.004	.057
NO2	<.004	<.004	<.004	.004	<.004	<.004	.004
NH ₄	<.01	<.01	<.01	<.01	<.01	<.01	<.01
TKN	1.53	2.13	2.02	2.32	1.12	1.29	1.33
oP0 ₄	.081	.098	.071	.092	.088	.092	.097
TP04	.122	.137	.129	.123	.118	.123	.136
TdPO ₄	.098	.126	.087	.110	.106	.112	.116
Na	38.39	39.03	41.03	39.73	38.07	40.68	37.59
К	4.05	4.10	3.44	4.20	4.13	5.44	3.98
Ca	57.07	58.33	63.24	62.31	59.10	55.68	57.82
Mg	10.06	9.88	11.62	10.72	11.85	11.18	11.25
C1	58.1	59.5	62.5	60.0	58.0	63.7	56.2
so ₄	21.4	21.9	27.5	25.1	26.4	25.8	22.8
si0 ₂	8.0	7.7	8.1	7.8	7.8	7.4	7.7
CaCO ₃	160.3	173.5	172.3	162.8	162.8	149.7	158.0

¹ surface sample only

alterations in an attempt to control water flows, provide for navigation, and to drain and irrigate the surrounding lands. The Caloosahatchee River has been replaced by C-43, 50 to 130 meters wide and 6-9 meters deep, with water control structures at three locations. The only remnants of the original Caloosahatchee River exist as 35 oxbows connected with C-43 between LaBelle and the Franklin Locks.

2. These 35 oxbows provide different habitats than C-43. Vascular vegetation in the oxbows occurs as emergent (<u>Nuphar advena</u>, <u>Zizania</u> <u>aquatica</u>, <u>Typha sp</u>.), floating (<u>Alternanthera philoxeroides</u>, <u>Sacciolepis</u> <u>striata</u>, <u>Pistia stratoites</u>) and riverbank (<u>Colocasia esculentum</u>, <u>Acrosticum</u> <u>sp.</u>, <u>Salix carolinana</u>). Occasionally submerged vegetation as <u>Najas</u> <u>guadalupensis</u> or benthic algae are present. Vegetation along C-43 is primarily limited to riverbank species such as <u>Colocasia esculentum</u>, <u>Myrica</u> cerifera, Schinus terebinthifolius.

3. Stabilized water levels in the Caloosahatchee River since the completion of the control structures is not conducive to quality aquatic habitat. Consequently, only a few emergent species exist, and floating type species are quite abundant.

4. Oxbow benthos were dominated by three major species, <u>Chaoborus puncti-</u><u>pennis</u>, the phantom midge, <u>Tubifex tubifex</u>, and the amphipod, <u>Gammarus</u> <u>fasciatus</u>. <u>Tubifex</u> and <u>Gammarus</u> are scavangers, feeding on algae and plant detritus, which is a major constituent of the oxbow bottom substrates. <u>Chaoborus</u> is a primary predator on <u>Tubifex</u>. The deep sediments in C-43, which are generally higher in marl content between LaBelle and Franklin Locks than were the oxbows, were inhabited primarily by <u>Tubifex tubifex</u>, <u>Chaoborus punctipennis</u>, and <u>Ablabesmyia cinctipes</u>. 5. Thirty species of aquatic organisms were recovered from artificial substrate samples in the oxbows. These were dominated by <u>Pomatropsis sp.</u>, <u>Geoldchironomus holoprasinus</u> and <u>Caenis dimnuta</u>. Similarly incubated samplers in C-43 were colonized primarily by <u>Cassidinidae lunifron</u>, Gammarus fasciatus, <u>Caenis diminuta</u> and chironomids.

6. The growth of periphytic algae on artificial substrates in oxbows and C-43 exhibited considerable variability, but tended to be higher in the canal than in the oxbows.

7. Water quality analysis indicated similar chemical composition between C-43 and the oxbows. Higher sodium and magnesium concentrations in the oxbows suggest that there may not be complete exchange of water between oxbows and the canal. Temperature, pH, total phosphorus, and sulfate were significantly higher in C-43 than in the oxbows.

8. The Caloosahatchee River oxbows provide a sheltered, shallow water habitat with a substantial amount of aquatic and overhanging vegetation that is not available in C-43. These oxbows are inhabited by a variety of organisms not commonly found in the canal. The District should strive to keep these waters in state ownership and prevent any further filling or blocking of the oxbows. Any procedures which would reduce or eliminate floating vegetation species from the oxbows should be encouraged. Agencies involved in weed control activities should refrain from spraying beneficial emergent or riverbank vegetation. APPENDIX I INVENTORY OF 35 CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER OXBOWS LOCATED BETWEEN LABELLE AND W.P. FRANKLIN LOCKS, FLORIDA

























DEPTH PROFILES		Houses N Houses Rest C C C C C C C C C C C C C
	DEPTH PROFILES DEPTH PROFILES Depth Profiles Depth Profiles 5 10 15 COMMENTS Bottom Substr B) Organic m	B (105') C (225') aterial, sand, detritus, dead <u>Corbicula</u>
OXBOW # 12 LOCATION R 27 E T 43 S SEC. 22 DATE INVENTORIED : 3/1/78 CENTER LINE LENGTH : 525' TOTAL AREA : 2.5 Acres	OXBOW # 12 LOCATION R 27 E T 43 S SEC. 22	DATE INVENTORIED : 3/1/78 CENTER LINE LENGTH : 525' TOTAL AREA : 2.5 Acres























C-43
DEPTH PROFILES
OXBOW # 24 LOCATION R 28 E T 43 S SEC. 21 DATE INVENTORIED : 3/29/78 CENTER LINE LENGTH : 800' TOTAL AREA : 1.7 Acres DRAWING SCALE 1" = 200 feet





rest or rest of the House C-43
DEPTH PROFILES
OXBOW # 27 DATE INVENTORIED : 3/29/78 LOCATION R 28 E CENTER LINE LENGTH : 1000'
T 43 $\frac{1}{5}$ SEC. 9 DRAWING SCALE 1" = 200 feet







House A C-43 House B A C A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A
DEPTH PROFILES
OXBOW # 32 LOCATION R 28 E T 43 S SEC. 13 DATE INVENTORIED : 4/26/78 CENTER LINE LENGTH : 880' TOTAL AREA : 2.0 Acres DRAWING SCALE 1" = 200 feet

C-43 A C-43 A C-43 Control A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A
DEPTH PROFILES
OXBOW # 33DATE INVENTORIED : 4/26/78LOCATION R 29 E T 43 S SEC. 7CENTER LINE LENGTH : 520' TOTAL AREA : 1.1DRAWING SCALE1" = 200 feet

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C-43
DEPTH PROFILES
OXBOW # 34 DATE INVENTORIED : 4/26/78
T 43 S SEC. 7 DRAWING SCALE $1'' = 200$ feet

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