

*Marjory Stoneman Douglas discusses pollution in Conservation Areas from cattle raising in South Florida*

Marjory Stoneman Douglas: Another thing that the engineers did that was so stupid, they were...they made Conservation Areas One, Two and Three, behind Palm Beach, Broward and Dade Counties, which they diked! Making ponds. They ran canals down from the lake, down to the Conservation Areas. And then from the Conservation Areas, canals are run into the well fields of the cities, in the different counties. Well, it wasn't very long before the Lake water began to be polluted, and that polluted water was run into the Conservation Areas, and we got polluted water run into our well fields, and the pollution continued in the Lake. The last thing the engineers did, that was so completely stupid, was, with the cooperation of the Water Management District, let's face it. I don't think the Water Management District let them do it without their cooperation, I would think they could have stopped them. They ran a straight canal down there in '69 and '70, fairly recently, from Lake Kissimmee down to Lake Okeechobee. It ran straight through and across the meanders of the Kissimmee River, the way the straight marks on a dollar sign run through the curvy marks. That water, it used to come down in the meandering river, of course the meanders of the river collected more water, but they came down very much more slowly. And any pollutions that got into it, and pollutions did get into it with the developments around it, were slowly purified by the slow course of the water in meadows with the purifying plants and so on. So it was comparatively clean, when it got into Okeechobee. But when they ran this canal down it...in the drained lands, the cattle were brought in and particularly a lot of dairy farms around the northeast edge of the canal and the Lake. You may not know it, but cows produce manure. I don't know that the people in the government knew that, (*audience laughter*). But somebody should have told them! Because the dairy farms dumped square feet of untreated cow manure into the canal and it got into the northern part of Lake Okeechobee, which is supposed to be the reservoir of our drinking water! So you can, today, fly over the northern part of Lake Okeechobee and it'll be all brown, because what with the pollution, the water hyacinth came in and this very awful weed, called hydrilla, which is below the surface, that came in to pollute the water, to use up the oxygen or whatever it does to the oxygen and destroyed all the great sports fishing of Lake Okeechobee, in fact the commercial fishing of Lake Okeechobee. Then, on the southern edges, I told you of where the thirty feet of peaty muck was, the sugar people came in. The agricultural people came in first, but the sugar people

came in and took over, because the sugar people had the idea that, in the United States, we should produce our own sugar.