

*Jack Kaufman talks about Florida Defenders of the Environment*

Interviewer: So, let me start by asking how you first got involved in the organization that we know today as Florida Defenders of the Environment.

Jack Kaufman: Well, my first contact with Florida Defenders of the Environment was I was in the hospital suffering from a severe concussion and I'd run into a metal goal post playing football. My whole face was all bruised up and my eyes were black and I had a severe concussion and I was in the hospital. I was recovering from this and Marjorie [Harris Carr] and her group were putting out the environmental impact statement on Cross Florida Barge Canal. They were writing and editing it, and Marjorie needed somebody to help edit. She had heard that I could write well and she wanted me to edit this thing. And so I was dragged down to the FDE office reading contributions that various chapters had come in, trying to edit these and put them into as good English as possible. The problem was, because of the concussion, I had an attention span of about five minutes. And so I could read a paragraph and by the time I got to the end of the paragraph, I didn't remember what the first part of the paragraph had said. And so I would have to spend, go over and over a paragraph because I couldn't remember what the first sentence said by the time I got to the last sentence. And so I spent days down there trying to clear my mind and trying to help edit these things. That's how I got started with FDE.

Interviewer: What made you stick with it?

Jack: Margie is a good arm twister.

Interviewer: Tell us about that.

Jack: Margie is very good at appealing to peoples' sense of duty, I guess. And, I'd gotten involved in the environmental movement when we were trying to stop a cross campus highway that was going across University of Florida campus by Lake Alice. And I found I was so angry at what they were trying to do that I literally couldn't sleep and I got involved in that effort, trying to stop this highway. And I guess Margie appealed to this same sort of feeling, this outrage at what people were trying to do, in this case the Cross Florida Barge Canal, which is a much bigger version of the same sort of thing as the cross campus highway. And Margie was very good at appealing to peoples' sense of outrage and duty in trying to put an end to

something like this. I never got into this, the idea of stopping it. I got into the idea of just letting people know what was going on so, that when this was accomplished, they would at least know what had happened and not have something put over on them. Margie, from the very beginning, saw this as a...we're going to win this. I never expected it'd be anything to win this.

Interviewer: So, you felt that it was important to tell people the truth.

Jack: Right.

Interviewer: And that there was something intrinsically right about getting the facts out to people.

Jack: I thought that the agency is responsible, in the case of the cross campus highway, is the University of Florida and in the case of the Barge Canal was the Corps of Engineers, for putting something over on the public, selling something as a good project for the good of the public that was exactly the opposite, and I thought people should be aware of that. They should know what they were getting into. They should know what kind of a thing they were being sold. And that's how I got into it, from a sense of outrage, not from any sense of expecting to stop it.