



FLORIDA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

414 N. E. 21st Avenue
Ocala, Florida 32670

26 January 1978

Mr. Lovett E. Williams
Southeast Section Representative
THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY, INC.
4005 South Main Street
Gainesville, Florida 32601

Dear Lovett:

As you are aware, the Florida Chapter, THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY, INC. has, for a number of years, been deeply interested in the outcome of deliberations relative to completion of the Cross Florida Barge Canal Project. Upon completion of the recent restudy of the project, the Chapter membership expressed confidence in the conclusions of the wildlife study team and directed the President (then Dr. Larry Harris) to present a statement to this effect to the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission.

Subsequently, on August 11, 1977, the Executive Board, Florida Chapter, THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY, adopted an ecopolicy (Enclosure 1) opposing completion of the Canal and favoring restoration of that portion of the Oklawaha River presently occupied by Lake Ocklawaha. Adoption of this ecopolicy was based on a review of the extensive restudy reports and the Environmental Impact Statement filed by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.

We request that you submit our ecopolicy to the Council for endorsement or adoption by the parent society at the meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, next March. We further request that, if the ecopolicy is adopted, the Executive Director, THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY, be instructed to: 1) transmit it to appropriate federal government entities and national conservation organizations; 2) express THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY support of S.1592 and S.1593 (Enclosure 2) which provide for deauthorization of the project, for a study of certain segments of the Oklawaha River for potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and for adjustment of boundaries of the Ocala National Forest so that much of the Oklawaha River floodplain is included.

On April 21, 1977 a hearing was held before the Subcommittee on Public Works, Committee on Appropriations, U. S. House of Representatives, with representatives from the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers in attendance (Enclosure 3). This hearing was chaired primarily by

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Representative Bill Chappell, Florida, a strong canal supporter. From the transcript it appears that only three other subcommittee members were in attendance. We believe that the hearing transcript reflects very poorly on the subcommittee. A report (Enclosure 4) subsequently filed by Representative Bevill summarizing the Committee's review of the project presented a very distorted picture of impacts, particularly with respect to impacts on wildlife.

We recommend that the hearing transcript and Mr. Bevill's report be submitted to the parent society's Conservation Affairs Committee for review and recommendation to Council as to possible action. One action which might be considered would be a letter to all subcommittee members, criticizing the manner in which this hearing was conducted.

Your assistance in these matters is appreciated. If any additional information is required for Council consideration please advise me.

Sincerely yours,



Nicholas R. Holler
President, Florida Chapter of
THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Enclosures