

June 19, 2003

Ms. Carla Palmer  
South Florida Water Management District  
2301 McGregor Boulevard  
Fort Myers, FL 33901

Dear Ms. Palmer,

The Southwest Florida Watershed Council is a grass roots, multi-county coalition of individuals, organizations, agencies and businesses that have come together to address issues affecting the Caloosahatchee and Big Cypress watersheds, including Naples Bay. The mission of the Southwest Florida Watershed Council is to protect, conserve, manage and/or restore the land and water resources of these watersheds through participation and cooperation of all stakeholders in consensus building, planning, and decision making to meet the economic, natural and cultural needs for this and succeeding generations.

The water quality of Naples Bay has suffered for several years, mainly due to the large population increases within its watershed. In fact, its original watershed covered an area of about 10 square miles. However, with the creation of the Golden Gate Canal System and its linking to the Bay, this watershed was increased to 120 square miles. Through the years, Naples Bay has had oxygen, salinity, and pathogen problems. Much of its natural habitat has disappeared under intensive human use. Along with these problems, huge seasonal influxes of fresh water from the Golden Gate Canal have created a stratification between fresh and salt water that has severely stressed the biota of the Bay. Essentially untreated stormwater, with heavy metals, pesticides, fertilizers, and oils, also ends up in the Bay's waters.

It is time to do something about this once pristine body of water. Several local and regional agencies and organizations are beginning to call for its restoration. To that end, the Watershed Council, by full consensus at its June 19, 2003 meeting, made the decision to request that the South Florida Water Management District address the water quality problems associated with Naples Bay by including it in the State of Florida's Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) program. I am asking that you please make such a designation at the earliest possible date and develop a plan to restore the Bay. We would also be pleased to help, in any way, with the development of that plan.

If you have any questions about this matter or anything else that we may help you with, please do not hesitate to contact the Watershed Council at any time.

Sincerely,

Susan Brookman  
Vice Chairman

*The mission of the Southwest Florida Watershed Council is to protect, conserve, manage and/or restore the land and water resources of the Caloosahatchee and Big Cypress Watersheds through participation and cooperation of all stakeholders in consensus building, planning, and decision making to meet the economic, natural and cultural needs for this and succeeding generations.*