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The President's Hoot - Common Sense: Protect Land to Save Our Lagoon and Waters

Our Indian River Lagoon (IRL) and rivers like the St. Sebastian River (SSR) have great historic names and much has been written about them. They are the veins and the arteries of our mother Earth. These were here long before we appeared. Yet rivers have given us means of transport, water to drink and food to eat. However, our rivers and Lagoon are dying. We who frack, dig, inject, fertilize, use septic tanks, distribute biosolids, and who pollute the rivers with chemicals and medicines may not realize that they are our precious life blood. Our Rivers and Lagoon Were Here Before Us But are Dying Because of Us.

Unfortunately, I too have a septic tank on the SSR. Although I pump it out every 3-5 years, my septic tank is nothing but a glorified outhouse like those where I grew up. They primitively spread nitrogen and chemicals into our rivers. A County-wide modern sewer system is needed that produces electricity and saves the nitrogen and phosphorus for reuse instead of sending valuable nutrients to our dump.

Unfortunately, the chemical cocktails going into our rivers and Lagoon from our lawns, agricultural lands, parking lots, and roads are never disclosed daily by the news media. As creatures of our Earth we depend upon our waterways, and native plants and animals. Our fates are connected, thus we all should have the same rights. We must stop polluting for everyone's health. What you throw into the river comes back to affect all of us. Polluting our waters contaminates our wildlife and ourselves.

To save our Earth including its people, rivers, Lagoon, fishes, manatees, and birds, we must recognize that humankind is not separate from nature. We are all part of the natural world and depend on it for our very existence.

Drs. Grant Gilmore & William Loftus recently wrote an outstanding opinion "Want to help manatees, limit pollution in Indian River Lagoon? Control yourself" reprinted in this Peligram. There are things that each of us can do: reduce or stop using pesticides, herbicides, certain household chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and fertilizers on our turf grass that pollute our waters.

Along with us working to save our Earth, we must elect leaders to pass laws to protect our waters and natural lands with their plants and animals now in cities, counties, states, nations, and the world.

Why plan new developments when the environmental health of our area is failing? While attending the Indian River County Metropolitan Planning Organization Land Use Vision Study workshop to discuss the future of our County, I asked the questions, "How many folks can the county support when our Lagoon and rivers are dying? Why are we planning more developments when even now we are losing our fishes, manatees, birds, and it is dangerous to swim in the Lagoon?" There were no answers to my questions and concerns.

While each of us can help save our Earth, our governments must stop "dumping" human poop on lands, and instead build innovative wastewater-treatment facilities where liquid is treated to potable levels, and solid poop becomes saleable fertilizer and electricity. Stop selling fertilizers with phosphorus. Fund and require septic-to-sewer systems conversion. Restore the ponds at the wastewater plant on 8th St. to attract both wildlife and tourists. Educate children and adults to work towards attaining a sustainable and healthy environment. Improve stormwater-treatment ponds and swales. Ban glyphosate, atrazine and toxic chemicals used in canals, lakes, and waterways. Restore habitats and plant native species. Conserve and preserve remaining natural lands. Provide state tax incentives for electric vehicles, and solar power for homes and businesses. Save aquifer water only for drinking, bathing, cooking. Recycle everything, especially water. In all new construction, stop clear cutting and save trees. Most important, pass laws to reduce turf grass to 15-20% of the yard and cure our lawn fertilizer and chemical addiction.

Let's enjoy having our clean waters, fishes, birds, and butterflies restored again and help do your part to save humanity and our Earth.