

Information Fluency in the Service of Community
Rollins College
ACS Grant Report

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Summer 2002

Most of the work this summer has involved gathering the materials for archives consideration. Attached you will find the newsletter item I have written to describe the summer work of the Friends of the Wekiva River (FOWR). We continue to meet this next month and hope to have some guidelines approved by then.

I have been in touch individually with those responsible for the workshop series in the spring course, but until the syllabus for the course is established in some final form, there is little use in the meeting of all four of us to plan the interconnections between the variety of workshops.

I have engaged the services of a student assistant from the English department to handle much of the clerical details of listing all the studies and folders in the cache of archive materials. Digitalization of some of the materials has already begun, esp. the rare home video which contains oral history from the earliest presidents and leaders of the group.

Finally, I have begun to use Blackboard for one of my fall term courses, and it promises to make interaction between students and workshop staff members work quite well.

Friends Take a Look at their History

Steve Phelan

9/15/02

It started in one of those locker storage facilities, Arlen Charters and I, rummaging through boxes, large maps rolled in burlap or paper, and a four-drawer file cabinet. We were trying to save the FOWR budget a monthly rental fee. What if we took all these old records of the Friends of Wekiva and put them to use for those who want to comprehend how the Friends got started and how they succeeded so well in such a brief time. How did Wekiva and the basin get the kind of protection and status it now owns as a national wild and scenic river with a state law especially designed for its protection? This quest has become the Archives Project.

With an agreement from the Olin Library at Rollins College and a small grant to help with digitalizing, we planned to haul the dusty trove down to Winter Park and start the process of sorting through the materials. At first, the bulk of the dusty stuff seemed to consist of studies and reports that the Friends have used to state their cases with the facts of ecology. Although these publications might be available elsewhere, having them all in one place would make it possible for future activists and environmental studies students to see the foundations in science of the decisions that are made in the trust of the public and private treasures of the river basin.

The rest of the material we found were hundreds of files outlining the projects FOWR has undertaken over the years in defense of water quality, habitat integrity, and wildlife in the basin. Backing those files are many which present the public correspondence of the FOWR to all the agencies of the state's comprehensive planning and other government agencies. To look through these files, even just the list of them, is to recognize that a small number of citizens—just 19 to start—did an enormous amount of work in a short time. It takes four pages simply to list the accomplishments of the group and the progress of the river in the past twenty-five years (click on Short History on our web site: www.wekivariver.org). Of course, Friends were not alone and the files reveal the strong set of partners in the community which FOWR were constantly calling upon.

Seven of the original charter members of the FOWR are still active and many came to two separate meetings in June to sort through and evaluate the materials. Each brought cherished, old documents and pictures of the early days. We also located two videos of past presidents giving an oral history of their terms of office (each two years). Eventually most of the earliest and most valuable resources will be put in digital form and loaded up on our website (look soon for a link to Archives on the home page).

Much of the work of that process will be generated next spring by a group of Honors students taking my course entitled The River Community. Their job will be to use the

knowledge of their own disciplines to otter through these archive materials (are there ferrets in Wekiva?), and figure out what would be valuable for the public to know. Eventually, this website material and the archive depository supporting it will help the organization train new members in the esprit de corps of the FOWR.