

PRESS RELEASE – for immediate release
November 3, 2006

Rivers Coalition Defense Fund Announces Historic Action

Stuart - Legal and local history in the making to save the St. Lucie River Estuary will be announced by the Rivers Coalition Defense Fund, the not-for-profit arm of the Rivers Coalition. A historic meeting will be held on Thursday, November 9, 2006 at 11 a.m. at Indian Riverside Park, Indian River Drive, Jensen Beach, FL with an important announcement regarding the long awaited lawsuit.

The action is a landmark attempt to stop immense discharges from Lake Okeechobee which have degraded the Saint Lucie River Estuary in most recent years. In 2005 alone, the discharges totaled 303 billion gallons. All citizens interested in restoring the river are urged to attend this announcement and Rally at the River.

The Rivers Coalition was formed in May 1998, following massive discharges from Lake Okeechobee. Founding members include; the St. Lucie River Initiative, The Realtor Association of Martin County, Treasure Coast Builders Association, the Audubon Society and the Florida Oceanographic Society. Membership has grown to over 40 organizations including Civic organizations, Businesses, and Homeowner Associations, representing over 200,000 residents.

Over the years, the Rivers Coalition has participated in focus groups, legislative initiatives and fostered open communication with all associated governmental agencies. The group has had several successes in steps to restoring the waterways, yet the biggest goal, stopping the discharges to the St Lucie River Estuary, has never been reached.

Since 1995, most years have seen the release of over 100 billion gallons, causing devastating effects to St. Lucie River Estuary. The result has been massive algae blooms, the likes of which have never been seen before, a dying estuary, once renowned as the most biologically diverse estuary in North America, and Health Department warnings posted to avoid contact with the water of the Saint Lucie River. The Rivers Coalition membership cast a historic vote in November 2005 to explore the possibility of a legal remedy to stop this harmful action. On November 9, 2006, one year later, the Rivers Coalition returns to the same waterfront park to announce their decision.

Join Leon Abood, Chairman of the Rivers Coalition along with the Rivers Coalition Defense Fund leaders and special guests for this important day in Florida environmental history.

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