

## IMPORTANT SOUTH LEE WATERSHED STUDY UPDATE

Fellow Residents of the Brooks:

As many of you know the Brooks Concerned Citizens and our allies including the Conservancy have been monitoring the original decision of the South Florida Water Management District to install five large culverts under Interstate 75.

To this end we have been able to get an agreement between Lee County and the District to fund a study to determine whether or not these culverts are needed along with other scientific assessments including the natural water flow of the entire area. This study has been known as the South Lee County Watershed Study.

The draft of the final report of the South Lee County Watershed Study was released last Friday. This 177 page document has a lot of very good information and could go a long way to help in future planning for this area if it is implemented in the proper way.

The study has used all the current and best information, modeling and science available and has identified a number of very interesting results.

- 1. The Brooks system cannot handle any additional water from under Interstate 75 without major modifications to the system downstream from I-75.**
- 2. The study identifies a number of areas and issues that could be improved to make for a better water flow system.**
- 3. Nothing that can be done to the Brooks (Halfway Creek) water flow system will help or alleviate the past or recent flooding in Bonita Springs. This is because the water that flooded Bonita Springs comes from the East not from the North as many in Bonita had believed.**
- 4. The addition of 1, 2, 3 or even 5 culverts under Interstate 75 into the Brooks water flow system will not help the flooding situation in Bonita Springs.**

Despite the findings of the study that is based upon accurate scientific modeling and much more, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has taken a position that they still are going to have FDOT place 3 additional culverts under I-75 into the Brooks and 2 additional culverts under I-75 further south in the area of Spring Creek at a cost of somewhere between 10 and 20 million dollars. This decision is not based upon science or the findings of the study but is merely a confirmation of the district's original decision and confirms what the district wanted to do regardless of the study's findings.

Those of us in the BCC who have been monitoring this study adamantly believe that this is the wrong decision and if approved by the District Board in June will be a waste of perhaps 15 to 20 million dollars of taxpayer's money. Unbelievably this is being recommended to be done at a time when there is an enormous revenue shortfall in the state budget and also at a time when the Florida

legislature has just diverted \$120 million from the state highway trust fund to balance the state's budget. Additionally it will not accomplish any of the goals of reduce flooding threats and It could also be detrimental to the residents of the Brooks under certain flood situations.

Some of us have spoken with our Lee County Commissioners, the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, and the Estero Council of Community Leaders. Each of these organizations will be supporting our position that the culverts are not needed and they will help us to do what we can to prevent the SFWMD from implementing their plans.

The BCC and our supporters have submitted comments to the SFWMD and will be following up with the District to try and prevent the culverts from being installed or at least getting some additional protection we need that is not in the plans at this time.

We will attempt to keep everyone informed as developments occur. Please stay tuned. We may be asking each of you to write email letters to the governing board of the South Florida Water Management District once we see the final report. Please visit our website at [www.brooksconcernedcitizens.com](http://www.brooksconcernedcitizens.com) to keep informed about the latest developments.

Respectfully,

Brooks Concerned Citizens (BCC)