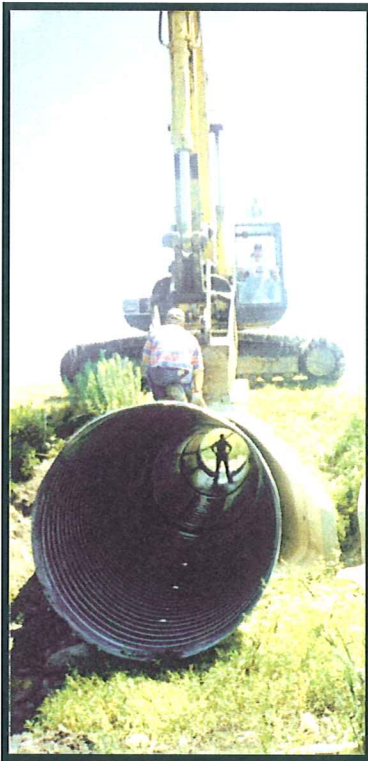
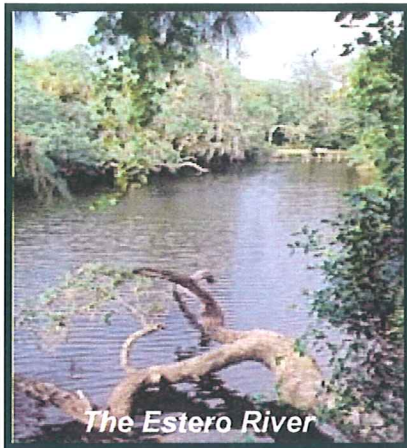


STOP UNNECESSARY ADDITIONAL CULVERTING UNDER I-75 WHICH WOULD DRAIN WETLANDS, DIMINISH WATER SUPPLY, FLOOD NEIGHBORHOODS, AND DEGRADE THE WATER QUALITY OF THE ESTERO RIVER AND ESTERO BAY!



The Conservancy supports the restoration of flow where it provides an environmental benefit and preserves public health and safety. However,

- A proposal by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) to install additional culverts along I-75 has the potential to drain *hundreds of acres of undeveloped natural wetlands* on the east side of I-75 next to the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed public lands and in Lee County's Density Reduction / Groundwater Resource Area.
 - The collection and redirection of flows would be routed west through an existing community into Halfway Creek, the Estero River and eventually Estero Bay - *posing a significant risk to public health and safety as well as water quality downstream.*
 - These culverts would be put in under the road through horizontal drilling, and *so could be installed the same way at any time.* The issue is attaining a commitment for FDOT to pay for them prior to the issuance of the SFWMD permit for I-75.
-
- The SFWMD acknowledges *that the culverts are not safe to operate under current conditions and that additional modeling and analysis is needed before they should be unblocked.*
 - SFWMD proposes to spend millions of taxpayer dollars to *put them in ahead of such modeling and analysis* and leave them blocked until they are determined to no longer be a risk to public health and safety, and the environment.
 - The Conservancy, affected communities, and the Florida Department of Transportation have forwarded *a sensible solution* – a permit condition that would provide the SFWMD a legally binding commitment that FDOT will pay and install culverts when they are demonstrated to be necessary and a benefit to public health and safety as well as the environment. *This would allow for the I-75 widening to proceed undelayed.*
 - Unfortunately to date, the SFWMD refuses to accept a commitment for installation pending that analysis and *continues to insist on the installation of these culverts regardless* – threatening to delay the widening of I-75 as well as put existing communities and the environment at risk.



ACT NOW!

Contact the SFWMD Governing Board and Lee County Commission to let them know *you oppose the installation of these culverts until the necessary modeling and analysis demonstrates that they are necessary and in public's and the environment's best interest!*

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Also, contact the Lee County Commissioners *before January 4th* and/or attend the *January 5th Board of County Commissioners Meeting* (Old Lee County Courthouse, 2120 Main Street, Ft. Myers – 2nd Floor) to give public comment.

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