

Paul Marraffino
19544 SW 82nd Place Road
Dunnellon, FL 34432

Robert G Schaff, Chief
Environmental Projects Branch 3
Division of Site and Environmental Reviews, Office of New Reactors
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington DC 20555-0001

Critical Bird Nesting Habitat Near Levy Nuclear Plant Site

At a public hearing two years ago I spoke of the unique quality of the environment of the islands and marshes of Lake Rousseau that support nesting, breeding and food for many threatened wading birds that are under stress. I encouraged both Progress Energy and the responsible government agencies to be mindful of this critical environmental area and review the impact of water extraction for the nuclear plant. The protection of the aquifer through minimum use of herbicides and exposure of the water table to other toxic chemicals needs further study. In addition a series of test wells circling the plant site with regular monitoring schedules was recommended.

Nuclear energy can reduce the negative impact on the environment that fossil fuels cause but must be designed and sited with a discipline that will not create other negative impacts. I have received distribution of a stream of letters and reports that are part of the environmental studies that are required for obtaining permits to build the plant but have seen very little reference to impacts on the water and environment of Lake Rousseau. The two nuclear plants would be located within 4 miles of Lake Rousseau and the water *Makeup Pumphouse* within half a mile below the lake.

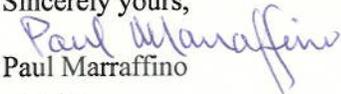
Sandra Marraffino has recently completed a two year study of *The Significance Of Lake Rousseau For Wading Birds And Difficulties Encountered During Nesting Season*. The report was targeted to promote the protection of the vast numbers of wading birds that nest on the islands, in the marshes in and around the lake. As part of this process she documented the thousands of birds that nest, breed and hunt for food on the Lake. The study includes nine (9) species that are listed as threatened by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and need habitat protection.

A copy of the report is enclosed. An electronic (pdf) copy of the report can be found in the **Education** section of the web site www.RainbowRiverConservation.com

Consideration of the impact of water withdrawals and reduction of flow rates in the river and lake and the impact on aquatic vegetation and fish populations which provide food and nesting location for several bird rookeries should be considered when establishing water withdrawal limits.

Thank you for consideration of protecting this valuable natural resource.

Sincerely yours,


Paul Marraffino
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cc Mr. Heinz J. Mueller, Chief, NEPA Program Office
Martha Barnwell, Progress Energy Florida
Gail Simpson, Progress Energy Florida