

January 1998

Farms threaten legal action - 1998-01-12

Audubon Lake Okeechobee Watershed Campaign Office

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January 12, 1998

Mr. Paul Gray
National Audubon Society
Fax # - 911-467-8497

Mr. Gray

Several people have reported in the last few days that you have stated that you are going to break the dike between Audubon and 101 Ranch.

As of yesterday at 9:30 a.m. the dike was holding back 41 inches of water. All parties agree that north of the dike there is in excess of 50,000 acres of deep water. This would amount to billions of gallons of water. This area would contain more water than the Florida Power and Light dam that accidentally broke about 15 years ago. Hundreds of homes and millions of dollars in damage resulted in this accidental break.

If it is true that you have any thoughts of this and that you would even think of committing numerous felonies and subjecting Audubon to millions of dollars in damages by such an act, then you should seriously reconsider.

A tidal wave would occur downstream and become a serious hazard to the homes, residents and animals.

This dike was built in 1938, over 60 years ago, and homes were built and land improved during the years of protection. Also there is a 1,000 acre farm involved that just started harvesting this week. A four foot tidal wave would wipe out this farm.

This is formally giving you notice that, if you break the dike and release this massive amount of water on our homes, ranches and farms, it will cause a very serious life threatening situation.

We fully expect to take legal action if this event occurs.

Joe Hall
Eagle Island Farms

Dr. Claudio Alvarez
CNC Ranch

Haynes E. Williams
101 Ranch

James Frazier
Frazier Ranch

Art Martinez
Prime Ranch

Steve Powell
Tiger Cattle Co.

Mike Powell
Powell Ranch

John Entry
Entry Ranch and Grove

Warren Prescott
J W Soil Inc.

William Gray
G and H Properties Ranch

cc:

John Morgan - South Florida Water Management
Ed Miller - Sheriff, Okeechobee County
George Long - Okeechobee County Administrator
Gene C. Neill - Okeechobee County Emergency Management
National Audubon Society
Cliff Bethel, Jr. - Chairman, Okeechobee County Commission
David H. Zellief - Okeechobee County Commissioner, District 1
Betsy Brubaker - Department of Environmental Protection