

https://www.chronicleonline.com/opinion/editorials/citizen-activism-drives-homosassa-river-cleanup/article_31ee605a-1d16-11eb-b000-6be586606637.html

Citizen activism drives Homosassa river cleanup

Nov 6, 2020

REMOVING MUCK

The issue: *Homosassa River Restoration Project.*

Our opinion: *Rehabilitation finally underway.*

Anthropologist Margaret Meade had it right when she said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

That’s exactly what happened some years ago with formation of the Save Crystal River group, and it’s happening now with the Homosassa River Restoration Project (HRRP) group. In both instances, dedicated citizens recognized the need for action to restore our rivers. They researched needs and solutions, undertook awareness campaigns, and dedicated themselves to fundraising – which in both cases has included lobbying our legislative delegation. And in both cases, it’s been successful.

The cleanup of the Crystal River, still underway, has shown what can be accomplished with effort, money and community support. It has become a point of pride for the city of Crystal River and the county. Now, after nearly four years of pushing, the Homosassa team is able to embark on a multi-year cleanup program that will, everyone hopes, turn out the same way.

Kudos to the dedicated, persevering Homosassa folks who worked so hard for so long to secure funding and make this happen – and as of the last week of October, work has finally begun. HRRP is using Sea & Shoreline, the same contractor that’s helping the Crystal River group. Both projects focus on first removing the Lyngbya algae and muck, then on planting native eelgrasses – opportunities here for volunteers — and promoting sustainability.

Kudos also to our legislators Rep. Ralph Massullo and Sen. Wilton Simpson, who supported funding requests (but not to then-Gov. Rick Scott, who vetoed an allocation in 2016). The community support is especially appreciated by the HRRP team, which is still actively soliciting donations and assistance from clubs, businesses and individuals to continue the work.

Citizen activism really is the strongest driver for change. As Margaret Meade also observed, "All social change comes from the passion of individuals."

So you know

Learn about the Homosassa River Restoration Project and follow its progress at www.homosassariverrestorationproject.com.