A site map can be viewed by clicking on the report site name.

EcoSummary

FISHEATING CREEK ABOVE US 27

August 21, 2002

EXCELLENT

ECOREG REF STREAMS

Stream Condition Index (SCI): The standardized biological assessment tool used by FDEP biologist to indicate ecosystem health and identify impairment as compared to reference (natural) conditions of streams within the various ecoregions of Florida

For samples collected before June 8, 2004
All field and laboratory methods followed FDEP Standard Operating Procedures and met FDEP quality assurance/quality control standards.
For samples collected on or after June 8, 2004
All field and laboratory methods followed FDEP Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and met DEP quality assurance/quality control standards.

Purpose



A single Stream Condition Index sampling was performed at this site in order to examine the water quality in the stream and document the organisms that inhabit a reference stream in this geographical area. This is important because information from streams that are relatively unaffected by human activities is needed as a baseline to compare more affected streams, and the biological standards on which the SCI is based require further refinement.

Watershed Characteristics

Fisheating Creek's drainage basin includes scrub, pine flatwoods, natural cypress forest, and improved pasture. Further upstream it is channelized and drains pastures used for more intensive cattle ranching. The area around the sample site is mainly natural forest and swamp. The creek flows into Lake Okeechobee.

Results

The SCI indicated that Fiseating Creek has adequate water quality to support a healthy aquatic insect community. The stream scored 31 points out of 31 possible,

and was rated "Excellent". Water chemistry met Class 3 standards for all parameters tested, although dissolved oxygen was relatively low at 4.9 parts per million, and total phosphorus and total Kjeldahl nitrogen were relatively high. The water level was above the banks and onto the floodplain. The site is located in a forested area. The riparian (stream bank) zone on both sides was cypress with a mixed understory and thick grass in patches at the edge of the creek. The available in-stream habitat consisted of sand (63%), with snags (26%), vegetation (6%), and roots/undercut bank (5%). Flow was strong (about 0.3 m/sec). The habitat score was 142 out of 160 possible points.

Significance

These results indicate that this stream has adequate water quality to support a very healthy aquatic community.

Suggestions

Encourage good land use practices in the basin, and maintain a monitoring program to further refine Stream Condition Index standards and to detect effects of changes in local land use.

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