

Lake Jackson Ecopassage

Turtle-lovers and Soccer Moms unite.

Since 2000, Dr. Matt Aresco, “the turtle man,” has documented over 11,000 attempted animal crossings--9,000 of these were turtles. Fortunately, once Matt saw the number of animals being killed, he went into action. He erected thousands of feet of nylon fence to block the animals off the highway and he walks the fence every day, and moves those stopped by the fence to safety. This method has helped save about 90% of the animals, but it is a temporary solution at best. The fence requires constant maintenance and daily monitoring, with some animals slipping under or climbing over the fence—not just turtles, but animals like frogs, beavers, otters, and foxes. A permanent solution would consist of concrete guidewalls and a series of under-highway culverts.



“How does the turtle cross the road?”
(Highway 27 crossing - Lake Jackson)

a serious road hazard. Some of those turtles are quite big and could cause a serious auto accident from vehicles swerving to avoid such large creatures.

I have been a supporter of the ecopassage from the beginning---it just makes sense. It will provide safe passage for people and safe passage for the animals of Lake Jackson. I’ve encouraged the County and the local transportation planning agency to take advantage of federal DOT grant funds earmarked exclusively to mitigate the environmental impacts of federal highway projects. This project has broad support not only locally, but nationwide. And happily, there is strong support by our local transportation planning agency as well.



“Large Snapping Turtle is rescued from heavy traffic where Hwy 27 crosses Lake Jackson”

THANK YOU CITY OF CAIRO!

For years Cairo, Georgia’s sewer treatment systems have frequently leaked untreated sewage that has flowed downstream into Leon County. Not only was the Ochlockonee River being polluted, but Lake Talquin and Lake Iamonia were also under threat.

As Leon County’s representative, I have been working with Georgia officials to remedy this problem, and it appears that our efforts are paying off. The Georgia Environmental Protection Department has ordered the City of Cairo to construct a new plant, or suffer substantial fines and penalties. By all indications, they are working quickly to have this done.

I am glad we were able to preserve our relationship with the City of Cairo and move this forward without wasting resources on protracted enforcement actions. Leon County continues to monitor this project and will continue finding ways to work cooperatively with our neighbors to the North.



