

# Living Waters

Aquatic Preserves of Florida



St. Joe Bay #3 by Clyde Butcher

Join us on Saturday, May 2 at 11:30 a.m. for an opening presentation by Clyde Butcher and Elam Stoltzfus. The event is free and open to the public.

On display at Rookery Bay Reserve's Environmental Learning Center  
300 Tower Road, Naples, FL  
April 30 - July 30, 2009  
Open Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

#### About the exhibit:

An artistic and educational exhibition aimed at increasing awareness and appreciation of Florida's aquatic preserves, Living Waters features artwork by Florida's world renowned nature photographer, Clyde Butcher, and a documentary film by Cinematographer/Producer Elam Stoltzfus featuring music by Sammy Tedder. This exhibition is a partnership of the Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Living Waters documentary film will be shown Monday through Friday at 11 a.m. while the exhibit is on display. Run time is approximately one hour.

In 1966, Estero Bay became the first of 41 aquatic preserves designated by the State of Florida. According to the Florida Aquatic Preserve rule, aquatic preserves have been established "for the purpose of being preserved in an essentially natural or existing condition so that their aesthetic, biological and scientific values may endure for the enjoyment of future generations."

This means future generations of all kinds – man, beast, fish, reptile -all those who use these marine, estuarine, and freshwater havens for habitat, survival, recreation and even artistic endeavors. Aquatic preserves are Florida's natural watery Edens. They are home to bird rookeries, fish nurseries, freshwater springs and acre upon acre of seagrasses, salt marsh mangroves, and other plant life necessary for food, habitat, and shoreline stabilization. Florida's aquatic preserves are seen but not always recognized as essential for ensuring that our natural heritage is maintained for the future. Many of Florida's citizens and visitors are unaware that they are living or boating on, fishing or swimming in an aquatic preserve; they just know they enjoy being on these clean and productive waters.

Florida's aquatic preserves merit a wider recognition for their special designation, and acknowledgement of their natural beauty and biological diversity. Educating and inspiring individuals to appreciate natural places through documentaries like this can make the difference between environmentally responsible use and unintentional misuse, or abuse, of these resources. That aquatic preserves are vital to Florida's economy, as well as an enhancement to Florida's quality of life, is undeniable. Aquatic preserves are the property and responsibility of all Floridians. They are ours to protect.