The South Venice Water Quality Task Force worked Saturday, Feb. 4. Volunteers picked up trash and labeled plants at the Grove at the Siesta Waterway. Seven adventurous volunteers then went down a 20-foot embankment at the corner of Baffin Road and Siesta Drive. They trekked in the waterway all the way to Alligator Creek. At times they had to crawl around overgrown Brazilian pepper trees. Rich Zinn said it was a very good hike and they didn't lose anyone. "It was a great tour," Dianna Brannan said. "I felt like Jane looking up at the jungle. Seriously, loved the beauty of it." Harrison Fox pointed out interesting things he saw. He has a plan to make a walkway. The volunteers love that idea. They met a few neighbors who thought they were returning wild pigs. They also saw Bruce Martin's property and deemed it "very nice," Lara Jansen wrote in an email.

Bill Brennan left his boots next to his truck and drove off. He went back and they were gone. Bottom line it was "a fun walk," Jansen added. The Grand Opening Celebration for the completion of the restoration of the Siesta and Briarwood Waterways will be in June, at a date to be determined. All volunteers are invited, as well as county commissioners and staff and all South Venice residents. The "Waterway Adventurers" included Stephen Brown, left, Bill Brennan, Dianna Brannan, Ilona Wilson, Harrison Fox, Rich Zinn and Bruce Martin.

Left: Ilona Wilson and Lara Jansen pose with trash bags and a very smelly cooler found along the banks of the Siesta Waterway near the Grove. The next Siesta Waterway work days are March 4 and March 25. New volunteers are welcome. Participants meet at the corner of West Seminole Drive and Quincy Road. For more information, call 941-223-6996 or email LaraineJansen777@gmail.com.

Above: Walking along the Siesta Waterway toward Alligator Creek.