

LIVE OAK, April 24, 2009 -- Suwannee County resident John Paul Schneider recently received special recognition from the Suwannee River Water Management District Governing Board for his volunteer service to the citizens of the District and the State of Florida.

During its April meeting, the governing board passed a resolution recognizing Mr. Schneider as an outstanding and steadfast advocate for the purchase and conservation of public lands to protect the water and related natural resources of the Suwannee River.

He also is credited with working with District staff over the past 20 years in encouraging equestrian uses and recreation on District lands.

Edwin McCook, District public use coordinator, says Schneider is the one who started bringing trail riders and other equestrians to the area to experience the beauty of the Suwannee River while on horseback. Schneider also has volunteered much of his time to help build and design trails on District lands.

"He's my expert on equestrian trails," said McCook. "I rely on him because of his wealth of knowledge about the equestrian industry and because he has ridden all over the United States."

Schneider recently was featured on the RFD Channel's *Best of America by Horseback* television series for his historic Suwannee River Wagon Train trek. Led by Schneider, the wagon train traveled over 200 miles, following the Suwannee River from its headwaters at Georgia's Okefenokee Swamp all the way to the Town of Suwannee on the Gulf of Mexico.