

Hurchalla lauded for Everglades work

The ex-Martin County official is tabbed for two environmental awards.

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Former Martin County Commissioner Maggy Hurchalla, an environmentalist who has fought for years to clean up and protect the Indian River Lagoon and the St. Lucie River, is finally getting her spot in the national limelight.

And not just once, but twice.

Hurchalla is the recipient of two national awards touting her work on the Treasure Coast portion of the \$8.4 billion Everglades restoration project, which

encompasses the Indian River Lagoon.

"I don't need to be recognized, but the IRL (Indian River Lagoon) does," Hurchalla said. "Things are going from optimistic to critical on the whole Everglades restoration. The more we can say to Congress, the better chance we have to show that the IRL project is the perfect way to start the Everglades restoration project."

Last month, Hurchalla was one of 12 people and organiza-



Hurchalla: Key supporter of Indian River Lagoon project.

tions to receive a National Conservation Achievement Award from the National Wildlife Federation. In May, her efforts will be recognized again. The Environmental Law Institute along with five federal agencies last month named Hurchalla the winner of the institute's Wetlands Award for volunteer leadership.

Hurchalla, the sister of former U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno, beat out 70 other nominees and will receive the award in Washington on May 20.

The award recognizes individuals for their efforts to educate the public, local organizations and government leaders about the value of wetlands.

Hurchalla has worked to re-

store wetlands by preserving natural habitats. Her work on the Indian River feasibility study has become a model for restoring natural habitats across the country.

"Ms. Hurchalla is a citizen activist whose long service to our county and state concerning major environmental issues have made her a legend in her own time," Martin County environmentalist Nathaniel Reed wrote in a letter to the law institute. "Maggy has been the guiding light in showing many other county and city commissioners throughout Florida that the policy of no further loss of wetlands can work, if the elected officials make the effort and stick with the program."

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APRIL 12, 2005