

Jan. 29, 2014 AP Florida Legislative Planning Session

Excerpts of former Gov. Charlie Crist comments involving Lake Okeechobee discharges:

"...I spent about half the honeymoon (in 2008) on the phone calling the members of that district and asking them to please honor what they shared with me and protect those rivers and stop the discharges. Because they had a vote coming up soon. Well, they honored it. They had integrity. They had ethics. And they did what they said. And those rivers started to clean up pretty quickly. It's amazing really. Mother Nature can really come back strong if you give it a chance.

At any rate, I was very proud of that, very pleased with that. And then Rick Scott gets elected. And guess what happened? Somebody said open it up again. And he probably got a contribution as a result. I'm just going to say it because it needs to be said. The truth needs to be said. And what's amazing to me is those rivers now are a mess. ..."

During Crist Q&A

The Florida Current: You suggested that the governor may have gotten a payoff perhaps involving the release of water from Lake Okeechobee through the dike...

Crist: *Payoff is your word. I said pay to play.*

The Florida Current: *OK. The Corps of Engineers released the water to avoid a breach of the Herbert Hoover dike. How could the governor have done anything differently?*

Crist: *How could the governor have done something differently? I used to be governor. They talked about the dike when I was governor too. And I made a decision. And the decision was I'm going to protect those rivers. And the audacity of this governor to blame it on the president of the United States? It's stunning to me. I was there. I made the same decision. It was the right call. And we cleaned up the rivers and nothing happened to the dike.*