

When you look at the name of some Cities, it's often hard to decipher what connection the name has with the place, or what the person or persons were thinking when they gave it the name. Sometimes it's derived from an Indian name or made in honor of some historical figure. But, there are rare examples of Cities whose name actually portrays a realistic picture of the community. Our City, Bonita Springs or "Beautiful Springs" is one of those examples.

We are in fact, surrounded and defined by beautiful waterways. Think about it... Oak Creek, Spring Creek, Leitner Creek, the Imperial River, Estero Bay, Fish Trap Bay, the Gulf of Mexico; and then to our east, the headwaters of the Imperial River, the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed. Along with all the named waterways there are also dozens of other flow ways, springs, ponds and wetlands. All of these waterways bring life and beauty in the form lush vegetation lining the banks, which create overhanging canopies. They form a beautiful oasis of native trees such as Maple, Cypress and Oak along with some exotics, including many fruit trees that were brought here by early settlers. This creates habitat for wildlife and as it turns out...habitat for us as well.

Now, I don't know if the gentleman developer that gave us the name had all of this in mind. He reportedly was looking for a new name for the small community that would be better at attracting settlers and property investors. The settlements previous name of "Survey", apparently, just didn't have that "ring" to it. It was Bonita's first "Branding" exercise. So, naturally, he named it after his daughter, "Bonita". Luckily for us his daughter wasn't named "Hope" or "Harry?" (not that there's anything wrong with those names, but I think you can see what I'm getting at.)

Anyway, the name seems to have caught on in a big way. We are a city of aprx. 45,000 people now. People that, according to polls and comments taken in conjunction with the City's new Branding Initiative, love the natural beauty of our City, actively enjoy the many waterways by swimming, canoeing, shelling, fishing and boating. And although some would rather spend their time golfing, playing tennis or shopping, they all seem to feel strongly that we should preserve and protect these wonderful natural resources. These resources are more than the reason that we have come to live here. They have become part of who we are. Part of our individual and community identity.

Summer time brings rain, and often tropical storms, hurricanes and more rain. Try as we might to tame the water, the ditches fill up, the creeks overflow and a water front view can momentarily take on a new meaning. But, that is part of who we are as well. Part of being a "Bonitian" is realizing that this is all part of a wonderful natural cycle. Without the rains and the storms there would be no beautiful watershed, no natural paradise called Bonita Springs.

The rains fall, the flow ways and creeks gather the water and lead them to the river, the Bay and eventually to the Gulf. Those of us that call this city our home have come from all walks of life and all parts of the world. In Bonita Springs, "Eventually, all things merge into one... and a river runs through it."