

# The Map Project

*By Richard W. Bowles (GOFC Newsletter, April, 1994)*

With 10 buoys in place indicating good fishing holes from Homosassa northward past Horseshoe, there was no way to tell anglers where they were. Just imagine what that grouper fishery was like club members eager to tell friends where to fish!

Joe Holton, a long-time GOFC member says, at a board meeting, probably during the time Bill Smith was president (1969), "somebody said the club ought to put out a map, a saltwater chart, that shows where our buoys are." And just like that, the club was involved in the chart-publishing business, an activity that continues to this day.

The GOFC charts have gone through three revisions. All have been based on the government marine charts. The first charts appeared about 1970, although the exact date can't be confirmed. They showed the locations of the 10 buoys, with compass headings showing how to get to them. Because of the conformation of the shore line, with the southern boundary of Waccasassa Bay and southward far east of the remainder of the Big Bend, it was impossible to accomplish this with one chart, so the club published a southern chart and a northern chart.

Government marine charts were used as a model. The charts located the numbered buoys, along with lines and arrows showing distances in nautical miles and compass headings from various points of reference.

As the buoys were vandalized, one by one, those first charts lost their value. The Board appointed a committee to issue a new chart. The names of the committee members appear on those charts, Dick Bowles, Joe Holton, Terry Johnson, Jimmy Moore, Nick Nicoletti, Herb Potts, Bill Sloan, and Bill Smith.

Architect Harry Merritt did the art work, and Herb Potts, a printer no longer in Gainesville, had the essential know-how to make the charts a reality. Herb's great moment was when he simply laid the Coast Guard chart down and revolved it about 30 degrees to the right. With that inspirational coup, Herb straightened out the Big Bend shoreline, making possible a single chart. These charts appeared about 1972 and included the Citizen's Band radio handles for marinas and residents in Cedar Key, Suwannee, and other shoreline locations.

The new charts were in such demand that the club placed copies of them in marinas and book stores, where they brought in revenue for the club. Members received charts printed on waterproof paper. Those the club sold were issued on regular paper (built-in obsolescence -- good for business).