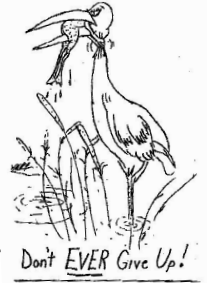


TOOFAR NEWS



Protecting & Conserving Our Water

April 2007 Volume 185

Our website: www.toofarinc.com

TOOFAR Inc

PO Box 2709

Inverness FL 34451

Phone 352-726-5004

Email address:

toofarinc@earthlink.net

Office Hours

Tues, Weds, Thurs 10-3

Meeting Notices

TOOFAR General Meeting

Thursday April 26 at 7pm

East Citrus Community Center

Speaker: Dave Moore

Executive Director, SWFWMD

TOOFAR Board Meeting

Thursday May 3 at 6pm

TOOFAR office

Citrus County Task Force

April 9 at 2pm

Dunnellon City Hall

Withlacoochee Basin Board

April 12, 2007

at 9 am

Brooksville

SWFWMD Governing Board

April 24 at 9 am

Brooksville

Citrus County Commissioners

County Courthouse

April 10 & 24

at 1pm

Sumter County Commissioners

April 10 & 24

at the Courthouse, Bushnell

April 17 at Laurel Manor

in the Villages

All meetings at 5 pm

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our lakes continue to recede. Our lakes are not fulfilling their historic function of recharging the aquifer. The level of water in the aquifer continues to drop. These things have not improved. Our drought continues. The newspaper reports that the Inverness pool is now over 5 feet down with similar drops in the Floral City and Hernando pools. It will probably be worse before it gets better.

Rain is the solution but with planning and effort we and our government agencies can improve the prospects. TOO FAR has been pushing for three proposals that are better accomplished during the drought and will make things better after the drought. Two of the proposals will cause water to flow into the lakes sooner and more frequently after the river comes back up.

The first is getting water through the Flying Eagle dike. We have asked that SWFWMD initiate ACTION in addition to studies and planning. Any flow through the dike, even a few culverts, will prove or disprove theories and get water from the river to the lakes well before water will flow through existing structures.

The second is cutting trees and brush at Flying Eagle. With the dikes stopping flow the natural marsh/meadow is being replaced by brush and thickets of trees that further impede flow. Volunteers with appropriate heavy equipment are awaiting confirmation of a date and a go ahead.

By the time you read this, SWFWMD should have responded on both proposals.

The third proposal is for muck removal. Muck removal should improve fishing, clear up the water and make room for more water in the lakes. The Citrus/Hernando Waterways Restoration Council – Citrus Task Force is trying to get some action started. It is late but getting work started will help the Task Force become a useful force for restoration. They have some good people who want to help. I wish them success and their success is our success.

AI

TOOFAR MISSION STATEMENT

A grassroots organization dedicated to the best management and conservation of natural resources for present and future generations through public education and interaction with all entities charged with these responsibilities

HILITES OF THE MARCH MEETING

By Pat Brady

Thanks to the Heaths for supplying the goodies for our meeting.

Al Grubman called the meeting to order and led the group in the Pledge followed by the Invocation. Minutes of previous meetings as well as Board Meeting Minutes are available in the TOOFAR Office. The Treasurer's Report was accepted as read subject to audit.

Speaker: Mike Bartlett, Supervisor Structure Control. Mike introduced Mike Holtkamp, Director of Operations and Tanase Bude, Structure Operations Manager. Mike B's presentation discussed the operation and control of structures on the Tsala Apopka Lake Chain including photos of all the structures with no water on either side, full open. There are no plans to remove any structures on the Tsala Apopka Lake Chain. If you removed the structure between Hernando & Inverness water would drain into Hernando as there is a foot lower elevation.

The SCADA System Alarms alert SWFWMD if water levels rise or drop, the rate at which they rise or fall and if there is gate tampering. All structures have real time video since 9/11 and are operated remotely from a laptop.

Q&A

What caused the Wysong to be fully lowered letting all the backed up water out? As the water dropped we started lowering to maintain minimum flows. Had to drop the structure to maintain natural flow when there was no water to send out through lower overflow.

Why have scheduled levels have been deleted from the hydrology reports? They were deleted because this measure is a throwback to previous days. The structures will be held at maximum desirable and minimum flood levels. There will only be a draw down during an excessive water event. Approximately 6 inches may be drawn down to prevent damage to homes, septic tanks, and autos. There have been no draw downs since the 2005 hurricanes.

What caused the lakes to dry up? What are the sources of water to the chain? Precipitation & run off, ground water supports the surface water, but when in extreme drought the support lowers. Any surface water is perking into the ground. We have a 15 inch deficit in rainfall over the past 12 months.

Mike shared his contact information in case folks had additional questions or concerns: 352-796-7211 x 4515 or 800-423-1476 x4515. Mike's email is: mike.bartlett@swfwmd.state.fl.us

Cake Auction added approximately \$245 to our bank account.

Al Grubman discussed what can be done about Flying Eagle in a meeting with Dave Moore, Executive Director, SWFWMD and his staff. SWFWMD was very receptive. They were also open to getting volunteers out to remove brush in the lakes, tentatively scheduled for April 14th. Al will be confirming and finding out the requirements. Concern is when the water does come up we want to eliminate interference and speed delivery of water.

Fish tales: Sally Heath got a 10lb large mouth bass. June Schmukal caught a 7 lb bass in a tournament. Congratulations.

Rol Steinhauser has resigned as a director.

Al awarded a plaque of appreciation to Mark Wilson recognizing his distinguished service as past president of TOOFAR. Al reminded the group of Mark's many contributions. A loud round of applause came from the group recognizing Mark's long and dedicated service.

Harry Shone won the \$80 bullfrog drawing. Meeting adjourned.

Cake Auction Kudos

Thanks to all the folks who donated baked goods for our cake auction. They sure were pretty and we bet taste great. Special thanks to Jerry Smart who volunteered to serve as auctioneer (he was great!) and to all who bid on all our baked goods.

Preliminary counts indicate the cake auction put \$245 into our bank account — and the fun we had was priceless.

The following is a Citrus County Chronicle Editorial that was published on June 10, 2006. It is reprinted here as a reminder that we need to be vigilant and vocal on water issues. Another year has passed and not much has changed. We all need to do all we can to fulfill TOOFAR's mission. Let's not forget that the Taxpayers Outraged Organization For Accountable Representation (TOOFAR) will continue to protect and conserve our water. So please, help us and Don't Ever Give Up.

Our Elected Officials Must Remain Vigilant

That Citrus County is going to continue developing at a brisk clip for the next 10-20 years is no secret, and there will be serious demand for more and more water to supply those new homes and businesses.

It's no secret that potable water will be the limiting factor for development in a state on growth steroids.

That is one of the conundrums inherent in the fact that in Florida, water is a public resource. You might be granted the right of first use by the water management district, but you don't own the water under your property.

Based on that, some overdeveloped areas such as Tampa Bay that have long ago developed past their capacity to supply drinking water have tried to lay claim to water from aquifers in other areas to feed their present development demands.

But the argument opposing them has been: Why should one area sacrifice its future development potential for another's present when the latter just guzzled all its water with no consideration for conservation and the future?

That's why the local-sources-first law was adopted, to force a region like Tampa Bay to develop alternate sources to ground water—including desalination—before using the public-resources argument to try to rob from someone else's future.

Now we hear the idea that the Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority is thinking about a regional wellfield. It would sell water to public suppliers in a multi-county area in the region at wholesale rates.

Regional water authorities were created in the Southwest Florida Water Management District to stop the water wars that were going on between Tampa Bay and counties to the north in the 1970s. The coastal municipalities and counties were buying land inland and north and pumping water south, sparking bitter and extensive legal battles with the unwilling donors about the water.

Three water authorities were created in the water district to develop water for their specific regions. Withlacoochee was the northern region, but because this region was so much less developed than those to the south, the Withlacoochee authority has never been a major provider, as are the two in the Tampa Bay and Bradenton/Sarasota areas.

Many in this region feel it is only the local-sources-first law that keeps the hungry water wolves to the south at bay, and that some day the struggle for this area's water will be enjoined in earnest because of the mega amounts of money involved in development.

So far, the backdoor and oblique efforts of Tampa Bay's water authorities, developers and legislative delegations, among others, to set up a way to transfer water around the state have been stymied.

So some antenna went up pretty quickly around here at the mention of a regional wellfield that would supply counties in this region. It wasn't Tampa Bay that first registered on the radar, however, though that region is always a consideration in anything that looks like a grab for water. Coming to mind first this time was that fairly recent Florida development phenomenon to the east known as The Villages, from which rumblings about needing more water have been emanating lately.

Like a mini-Tampa Bay, this sprawling development has been growing at a rate that an oncologist could appreciate.

Since local elected officials from the region make up the Withlacoochee board, they have direct knowledge of what's going on, and we fully expect our representatives not to let any ruse or smoke screen mask what's going on.

The water district hasn't even set the minimum flows and levels for water in this region. Consequently, county officials have not been able to take those figures and factor in what our future growth needs will be in relation to our supplies and any potential environmental damage over-pumping could cause, as happened in Pasco County a decade ago. So whether this county has any "extra water" the supply authority could sell is conjectural at best.

But whatever happens, this is the final truth: It would be extremely unjust to allow any entity to rob our county of its future potential to feed profit-driven plans of developers elsewhere who have no responsibility in making sure we have good growth management in Florida.

Our elected leaders need to stay on top of this.

Citrus County Chronicle Editorial 6/10/06

SWFWMD PRESS RELEASE March 28, 2007

District Approves Water Use Permit for The Villages

The Southwest Florida Water Management District Governing Board Tuesday approved a consolidated water use permit that will increase The Villages' water supply from 14.7 million gallons per day (mgd) to 23.7 mgd of ground and surface water to meet its future needs.

The increase in the annual average quantities is due to projected increases in the residential population, commercial development and recreational facilities, such as golf courses, within The Villages.

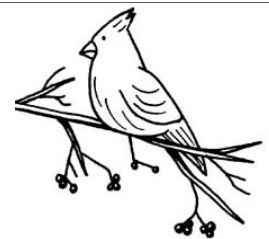
The permit requires The Villages to develop 7 mgd of alternative water supplies to reduce groundwater withdrawals. Additionally, the permit requires The Villages to conduct extensive data collection and monitoring, as well as to develop and implement an Impact Management Plan to ensure that no adverse impacts will occur to the area's water resources.

All reclaimed water generated at The Villages will be used for golf course and common-area irrigation. It is estimated that by 2013 a total of 8.6 mgd of reclaimed water will be generated and used for irrigation. Approximately 1.2 mgd will be provided by the City of Wildwood and the remaining 7.4 mgd will be generated within The Villages.

The consolidated permit combines and modifies three existing water use permits with two new water use applications to create one water use permit. The permit will expire on March 27, 2013.

Attention All Snowbirds

As you make plans to head North, please include us in your planning. Call the office at 352- 726-5004, email us at: toofarinc@earthlink.net or snail mail us at TOOFAR, P.O. Box 2709, Inverness, FL 34451 to let us know where to send your newsletter. Don't miss one exciting issue of our newsletter! We hate to see you go. Have a safe trip and we'll see you in the Fall/Winter.



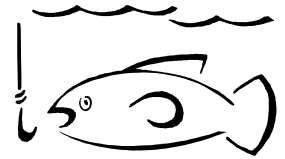
April is Membership Month

The Membership Committee has designated April as Membership Month. We're asking that each member sign up at least one new member. We're sure you know at least one person who isn't a member and who feels the same way you do about our water. Anyone who signs up a new member will be entered into a lottery for a \$20 gift certificate and the person who signs up the most new members will be awarded a \$20 gift certificate. Winners will be announced at the May General Meeting. Please make sure the new member states on their application that they were referred by you so you get credit for the sign up. The race is underway!

Thank you.

THE CATCHING REPORT

by Jerry Schneider



Hello Fellow Fishermen, I hope these words find you healthy and happy.

On the Salt:

It appears the March winds have blown some warmer weather our way. The rising water temps have brought an increase in the feeding activity of our finny friends. One local guide is catching trout and reds on cut bait, a method usually used when targeting goliath grouper. With the reopening of trout season in March the really big trout that were being caught in late Feb. have disappeared. Nice trout and reds are still in the Homosassa and Crystal Rivers. The rapidly warming shallow flats are showing a big increase in activity. The Progress Energy canals and spoil banks are another area to look at for trout and reds. While you are there take a shot at the sheepshead and black drum. Their appetite is improving also. The Levy county flats are also producing some very nice flounder, if your taste runs in that direction. The warming waters are also bringing some "line siders" back to our area. A few snook in the 20lb range have been boated around the mouth of the Crystal River.

Getting Fresh:

Rising water temps that stimulate feeding and low water levels that congregate the fish into smaller areas have vastly improved the bass fishing in our area. In conversation at the Hwy. 44 boat ramp I learned of larger fish being caught. Bass in the 3 – 6lb range were boated by several parties that day.

I'm moving an adjective in reporting that June "Big Fish" Schmukal bested her husband Greg, the former "Big Fish" in a recent "Fishers of Men" tourney on Lake Rousseau. Her 7.5 lb bass took the big fish honors and pushed them to a second place finish.

Bragging rights this month go to Sally Heath. A 10lb Floral City bass fell prey to her skills. If June and Sally became a tournament team the guys would have to resort to dynamite to win one. Well folks it is time to end this. I wish you blue skies and tight lines, Get out there on "Lake Catchabigun" and enjoy yourself. Jerry's gone fishin'.

Fish Camp Philosophy: "A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feather. It is Earth's eye, looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature." Henry David Thoreau

WHAT'S UP?

April is Sign Up a Member Month

April 26 General Meeting—Franks, Beans, Slaw and Chips Dinner for \$5.00 at 6 pm

May 24 General Meeting Speaker: Commissioner Joyce Valentino

June 28 General Meeting Speaker: Philip Rhinesmith, SWFWMD

Senior Environmental Scientist

See you there!

AJ Hendrix
BUILDERS, INC.



Andy Hendrix

State Certified Building Contractor
CBC 042328

293 N. Cherry Pop Dr.
Inverness, FL 34453



(352) 726-2401

Bananas

Buddy's Produce
&
More

Free Item with Ad American Owned

Les Hargis—Owner

Daphne Rooks—Assistant Manager

Tomatoes

2285 N. Florida Ave., Hernando
352-302-6200

Citrus

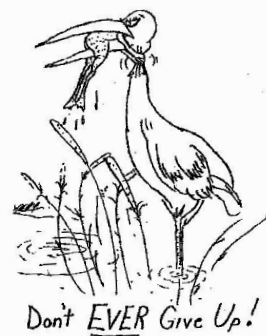
Potatoes

**TOOFAR INC
PO BOX 2709
INVERNESS, FL
34451**

**PRST STD
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO 31
INV. FL**

IN THIS ISSUE

**Meeting Notices
President's Message
Hilites March Mtg.
Cake Auction Kudos
Vigilance
Thirsty Villages
Snowbirds
Membership Month
The Catching Report
What's Up
Lake Levels**



**NEXT GENERAL MEETING - THURSDAY - APRIL 26, 2007
7 pm at the East Citrus Community Center
Speaker: Dave Moore
Executive Director, SWFWMD**

Lake Levels as of April 2, 2007

Structure:	Current	The Wysong Main Gate is fully open. Low Flow Gate is fully open. 40 cfs total flow. Floral City, Inverness and Hernando Pools— structures are closed. Leslie Heifner gate closed. Please call Mike Bartlett, SWFWMD, at 800-423-1476 ext. 4515 for more information on the lake levels and structures.
Floral City	36.04	
Inverness	35.40	
Hernando	34.93	
Panasoffkee	37.18	
Wysong Up Stream	34.86	
Wysong Down Stream	34.87	
Leslie Heifner Outside	37.04	
Leslie Heifner Inside	36.64	
Levels are in ft. above sea level.		

**Remember to recycle and deposit your cans and newspapers in our recycle bins.
Newspapers in bin and cans in plastic bags on the porch.
TOOFAR is located at 26 N Florida Avenue, Inverness. Thank you!**