

TOO FAR NEWS



Protecting & Conserving Our Water

August 2007 Volume 189

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has again, at the tail end (we hope) of a drought, agreed to do a small muck removal project in Floral City. Their commitments drag and we wonder if the work will end up being cancelled again just as it was at the end of the last drought when delays held off work until the rains came. It is hard to tell whether the delays are bureaucracy, incompetence or a calculated plan to delay work until it can be cancelled because of wet ground.

SWFWMD does not seem to be backing away from its Flying Eagle Dike culvert pilot program. Dave Moore said they would do it and it appears that it will be done. Bruce Wirth says that neither rain nor water levels will hamper the job.

SWFWMD does seem to be avoiding all drought time maintenance or improvement opportunities in the Withlacoochee Basin, Tsala Apopka Lake Chain. They claim that anything that could or should be done is fish habitat work that Fish and Wildlife should or has been doing. They ignore the vast volume of muck that reduces the capacity of our lakes to hold water to feed the aquifer and delay drought shortages. They have lost sight of the entire concept of reservoirs as being the solution for water shortages and our lakes being the least expensive and most natural reservoir. The muck is exposed and can be removed at much lower cost than dredging at full pool. The reduction of nutrients and BOD would be a blessing to our lakes. They ignore the clogged channels especially between the lakes and between the lakes and structures.

South Florida WMD, even with stumbles, has taken a leadership position in drought opportunities at Lake Okeechobee. SWFWMD has missed the boat. The Executive Director, Dave Moore, is a bright, able and conscientious executive but I fear he is getting bad advice from a cabal of middle managers that do not seem to understand the importance of serving us who support them with our taxes.

SWFWMD should understand and follow their own Strategic Plan which includes "...to fulfill the District's mission to provide a sustainable water supply, while restoring and protecting the environment." The sink hole that has opened up in Morrison Pool (Little Lake Henderson West) is a shortcut for the Inverness Pool water to get into the aquifer but it would get better purification by soaking through the ground and we would like to have the water in the lakes for a while longer. The rapids rushing under the trail's old railroad bridge are amazing.

AI

In Loving Memory

Long time TOO FAR member and supporter, Nancy Stuckman passed away. All who knew her, know she was one of the kindest people ever. She will be missed, but will live in the hearts of us all. We offer condolences to and prayers for her husband Howard and family members. May she rest in peace.

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Email address: toofarinc@earthlink.net Office Hours Tues, Weds, Thurs 10-3
Our website: www.toofarinc.com

Meeting Notices

TOO FAR General Meeting
Thursday Aug. 23, 7 pm
East Citrus Community Center

TOO FAR Board Meeting
Thursday Sept. 6, 6 pm
TOO FAR office

Citrus County Task Force
August 13 at 3 pm
Lecanto

Withlacoochee Basin Board
August 16 at 9 am
Brooksville

SWFWMD Governing Board
August 28 at 9 am
Brooksville

Citrus County Commissioners
County Courthouse
August 14 & 28 at 1pm

Sumter County Commissioners
Bushnell Courthouse
August 28, at 5:30 pm
Colony Cottage

HILITES OF THE JULY MEETING

By Jan Grubman

Thanks to Mary Agius and Jerri Regan for the "Ice Cream Social" in the coffee room (and for removing all of the calories before dishing out GREAT sundaes, cookies and cake!)

Al Grubman called the meeting to order, led the group in the Pledge and gave the Invocation. Minutes of previous meetings as well as Board Meeting minutes are available in the TOO FAR office. The Treasurer's report was accepted as read subject to an audit.

Guest Speaker – Due to unforeseen circumstances, Jamie Adams ("Outdoors with Jamie"), Chronicle Reporter and retired Sumter County Sheriff, was unable to attend our meeting.

Hopefully he will be our guest speaker at a future meeting. Al opened the meeting with project status including Flying Eagle Culvert Project: culverts are expected to arrive next week. Duvall Island ramp area muck removal: no equipment on site yet.

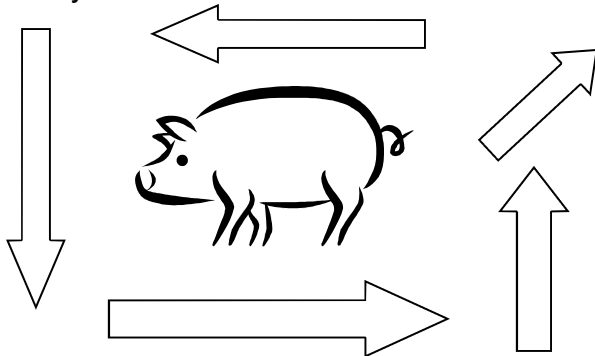
Mike Hulon from Texas Aquatic Harvesting spoke about harvesting, its use, status and limitations. Mike will follow-up and get Al information on muck availability for public use or TOO FAR distribution.

Bullfrog drawing was won by Ralph Neal - \$24.

Questions were solicited from the members and discussions about fund raising ensued.

Volunteers for the coffee room are needed for August, October and December. Please call Jerri Regan at the office (726-5004) to sign up. Meeting adjourned.

Pig out time is approaching fast. Don't miss any of the fun. Follow the arrows.



WHAT DOES TOO FAR NEED?

Who? You!

What? To attend the 16th Annual Pig Roast Planning Meeting

When? September 27, 2007 at 6 pm before our General Meeting

Where? East Citrus Community Center

Remember: You are TOO FAR! See you there.

Wear your TOO FAR shirt to the Twelfth Annual Save Our Waters Week September 14-22
For more information/list of activities visit our website or contact SWFWMD at 352-527-8131
P.S. Make sure to say "Hi" to Al and Greg

TOO FAR is 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.

Frustrated Member

The following was sent to the Chronicle by Al Grubman, President of TOO FAR and was printed on July 17, 2007. It is a copy of a letter Al received from a very frustrated TOO FAR member.

Al wrote: A TOO FAR member sent me the following letter expressing his and our frustrations. We have followed up with Florida Fish and Wildlife without receiving anything but confirmation of the excuses and delays. The drought is frustrating and depressing but offers opportunities to do lake maintenance while the bottom is exposed. Government has recognized the potential, has expressed regrets after the last drought and promised to be ready for the next drought. They were completely unprepared again, but finally agreed to this one little project. Even though small, the project excited us. It hurts to see it slip away.

A TOO FAR member wrote: Is the Duval Island boat ramp basin destined to have another drought slip by without having the muck sediment removed? At the request of Citrus County Commissioner John Thrumston the Florida Fish and Wildlife people agreed to remove the muck. The removal was to have occurred in June but was delayed due to permitting. Then with permits it was scheduled for July 1st. Apparently some other delay occurred and it was rescheduled for July 10th. That date has come and gone now the latest excuse is due to finalizing a contractor to do the job. How long does it take to select a contractor? Perhaps it will take just long enough for the rains to make the area too soupy and soft for heavy equipment to move about and the project can be set aside to wait until the next drought. Incidentally, the Duval Island ramp basin was permitted and scheduled for muck removal during the last drought but at the last minute was cancelled by Fish & Wildlife. What has happened to the old expression, "Where there is a will, there is a way"?

SWFWMD Lake Level Readings

Contributed by Mike Bartlett, Structure Control Supervisor, SWFWMD

Mike did such a great job of explaining the flat readings for the lake levels that we asked him to prepare a write up for our newsletter. Mike wrote: During extreme periods of drought, water levels drop well below normal in the Tsala Apopka chain of lakes. During these times, water levels in the lakes can fall below the minimum point of measurement at the District's sensors that monitor water levels. When this occurs, the sensor is said to be "dry", meaning that the location of the water level sensor no longer contains any measurable amounts of water. When a water level sensor becomes dry, the attached data recorder will continue to log the last data point available (the minimum reading) until water levels recover. This causes the data recorded from the site to remain constant, creating a condition known as "flat lining" when data are graphed. A change in this "flat line" condition on the graph will not occur until water levels rise above the minimum measurement of that sensor.

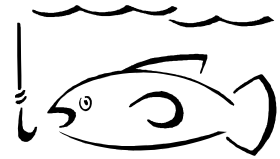
The District does it's best to place water level sensors in the Tsala Apopka Lakes in the deepest water possible, however, the sensor still must remain cost effective to install, and also be readily accessible for maintenance and repair. A water level sensor that is placed in the deepest part of a water body, for example in the middle of the lake, would be not be cost effective to install, maintain, or repair and would be prone to damage from boat traffic, and have a greater potential for damage from vandalism.

Thanks Mike! We appreciate your assistance.

Thanks to Jeff Umphress and NEAT-N-TIDY for keeping our office grounds neat-n-tidy. See Jeff's ad on Page 5. Thanks again, Jeff.

How can we do a better job? Please share your thought with us. Call the office at 352-726-5004 or email us at toofarinc@earthlink.net to share items of concern or news. Let us know what you think. Thank you.

THE CATCHING REPORT
by Jerry Schneider



Hello Fellow Fishermen, I hope these words find you healthy and happy. It seems the Good Lord has seen fit to send more numerous afternoon showers our way. An inch here and an inch there are surely welcome but hardly enough to remedy our situation. The hurricane season is well under way without so much as a hint of activity down in the Caribbean. If things continue as they are through this “wet” season, our lakes and rivers will be in a world of hurt next year.

On the Salt:

The summer fishing pattern continues out in the Gulf. Warm water temps, plentiful bait fish pods, and light winds from the east are the perfect combo for a good day on the water. Larger tarpon and cobia continue to move up the Gulf Coast along with their ever present black tip sharks. These sharks can sure be a pain in your tarpon. Mangrove snapper are becoming more plentiful. They are being taken from grouper rocks and wrecks 30’ – 40’ deep. Trout and reds are in their usual summer haunts and they are hungry. Don’t forget to check under floating grass mats for the tasty tripletail.

Getting Fresh:

Our pres. Al Grubman told me the recent rain has managed to refloat his bass boat. Taking advantage of this he has been landing nice fish in the 2 – 3lb. range. My neighbors here in East Cove are still doing well with an occasional bass in the 5 – 6lb. range. Greg and June Schmulak have been working Lake Rousseau. Get on the water early if you want to work the plentiful schooling bass. The bite slows as the sun gets higher but it is still good says Greg. That’s all there is for this month. I wish you blue skies and tight lines, Jerry’s gone fishin’.

Fish Camp Philosophy: “He that would catch fish must venture his bait.” Ben Franklin



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**NEXT GENERAL MEETING - THURSDAY - AUGUST 23, 2007
7 pm at the East Citrus Community Center**

Lake Levels as of July 23, 2007

Structure:	Current	
Floral City	36.02	The Wysong Main Gate is fully open. Low Flow Gate is fully open. 0 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 infor- mation on the lake levels/structures.
Inverness	34.17	
Hernando	34.37	
Panasoffkee	37.31	
Wysong Up Stream	34.83	
Wysong Down Stream	34.66	
Leslie Heifner Outside	36.62	
Leslie Heifner Inside	36.66	
Levels are in ft. above sea level.		

Monitoring sensors are out of the water/dry when the following levels are reported and flat lined: 35.98 at Floral City, 34.17 at Inverness and 34.32 at Hernando. Find out more on page 3 of this Newsletter.

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